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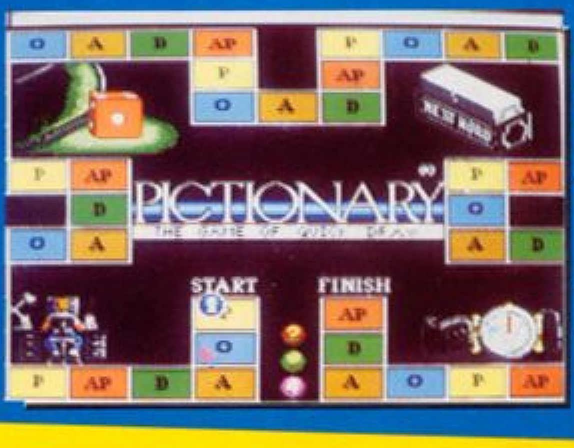

STUFF THIS!

Software houses rear Christmas turkeys. ACE carves them up...

ISSN 0954-8076

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60
SCORE
LAP
START
NEW YORK
READY
OVERHEAT
STAGE 1

1
SCORE
LAP
0'28"60
OVERHEAT
STAGE 4

51
SCORE
1626850
LAP
0'08"60
TURBO AVAILABLE
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STAGE 5

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SCORE
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SPECIALS

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SHOCK HORROR! 35
There you are, cowering behind the sofa in a cold sweat, trembling violently, stomach churning, and screaming for Mummy. Too bad everyone else is out for the evening. You knew it was foolish, but you just had to load up *that game* one more time, and now you're very, very sorry...Just a nasty dream? Or could software houses really give us the jitters?

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That innocent-looking fruit machine has the same sound chip as your ST, more memory than a Spectrum, and is carefully programmed to swallow your cash. Fruit coder Lee Witek opens the case...

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Gamesters in Japan can now play *AfterBurner* on the first machine with a built-in CD-ROM...

TOWNS SENSATION

Ever since we first printed a picture of Fujitsu's FM Towns computer, we've been inundated with demands from readers for more information. We're delighted to oblige. Thanks to some timely co-operation from Japan's famous Log In magazine, we've been able to bring you a report on this record-breaking 32-bit games micro on page 27...

FM TOWNS – a machine to satisfy your wildest dreams, complete with CD-ROM and massive processing power...

ANCO

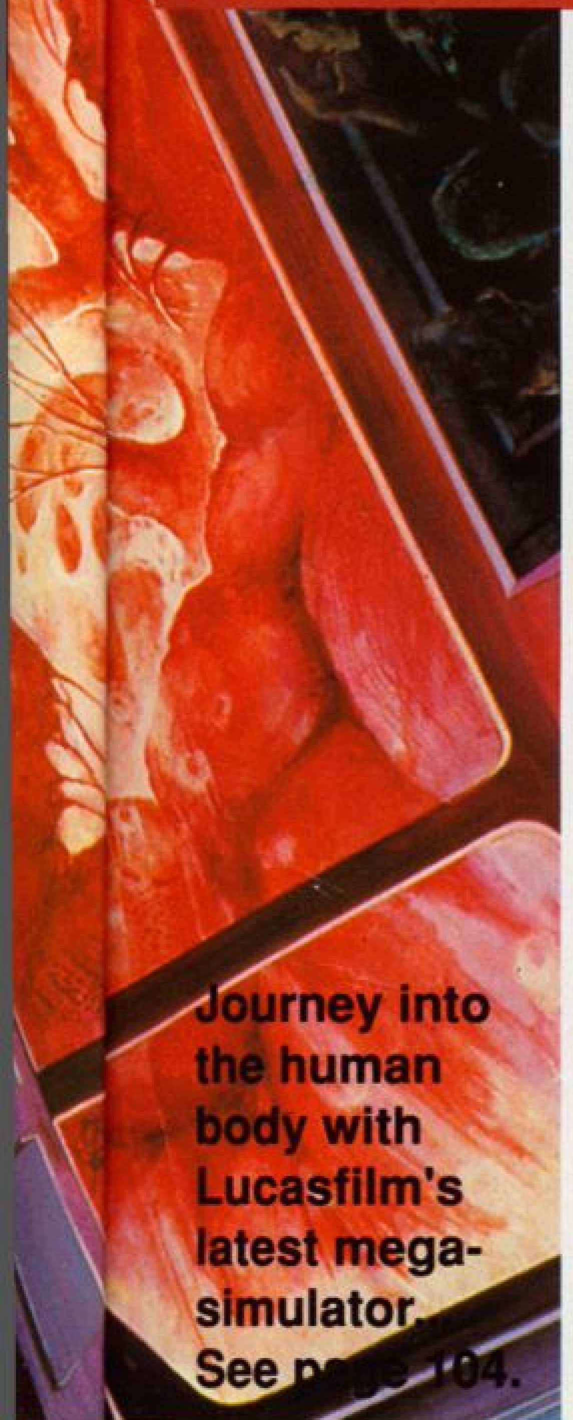
Anco are celebrating the launch of *Player Manager* by giving you the

WHAT A MONTH!

OK, so Christmas is on the way, but that's still no excuse for bombarding you with all the goodies we've packed into this issue. Find out about Tetris II; the extraordinary FM Towns computer; a simulator that plunges you into the depths of the human immune system; a coin-op that contains a PC Engine; which of this month's games you've got to grab; and much, much more.

Not only that, but we've gone overboard on the giveaways. You can win an Atari Lynx, or (courtesy of Anco) a stunning Sony video camera, and pin up on your wall the ultimate new technology wallchart.

The ACE Technochart comes free with this issue and gives you details on almost all the hardware you're likely to find in the shops in Britain – and quite a few that you won't. It gives you a complete guide to computer entertainment in one glorious full colour experience. Eat turkey, Santa...



Journey into the human body with Lucasfilm's latest mega-simulator... See page 104.

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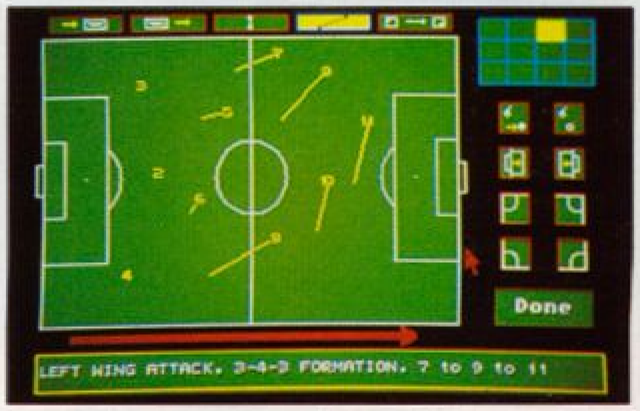
WIN! WIN! WIN!

AN ATARI LYNX CONSOLE 121
Get your paws on one of the world's most desirable hand-held consoles – absolutely free!

ANCO BANCO! 40
Win a free video camera and record those games live!



Anco's *Player Manager* takes the field...

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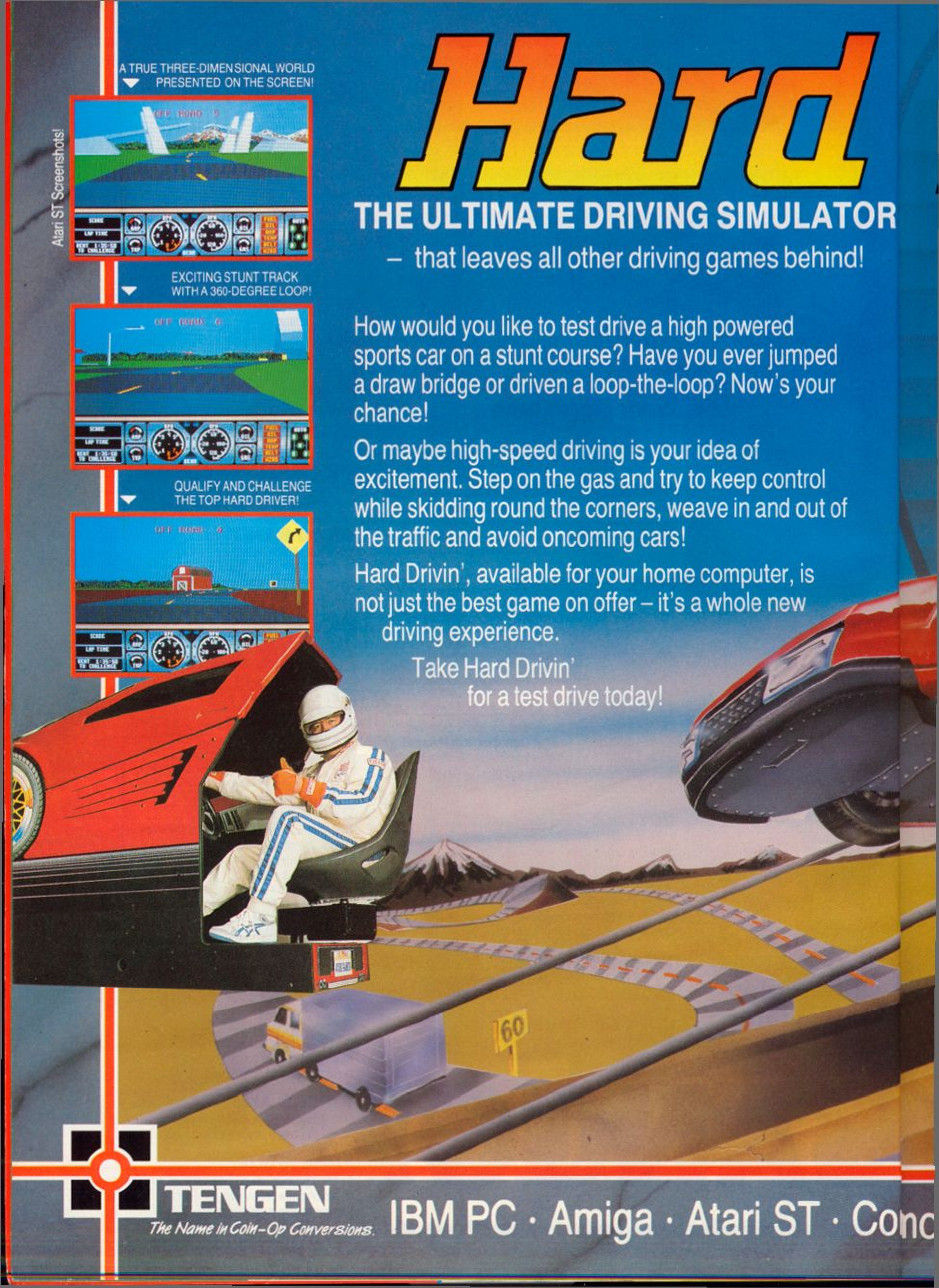
FREE ISSUE! 120
A year of authoritative game reviews, exclusive coverage of exciting new technology, and a free issue of Britain's best computer entertainment magazine – for only £17.95.

BANCO!

the chance to win a free video camera - kick off on p.40.



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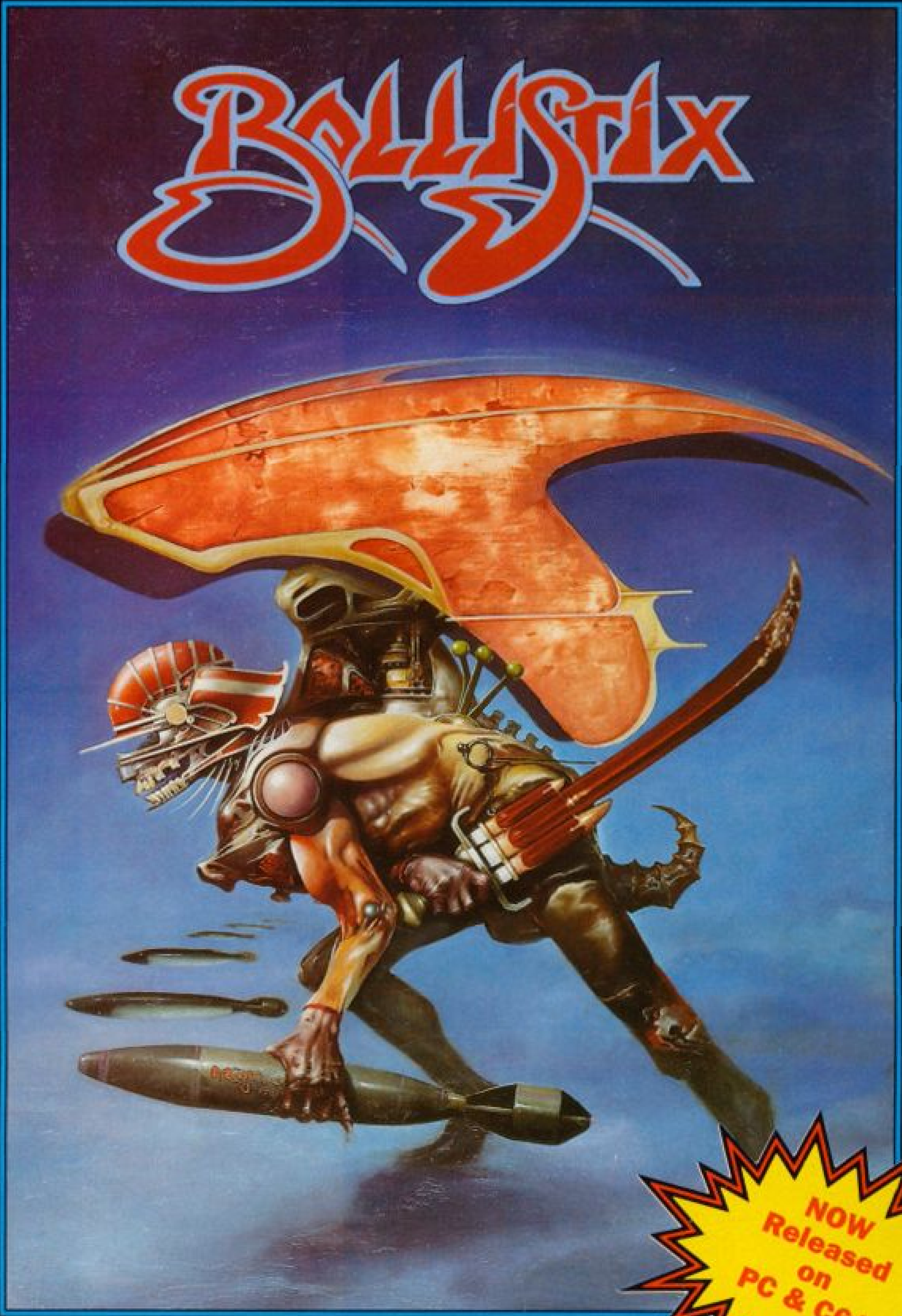

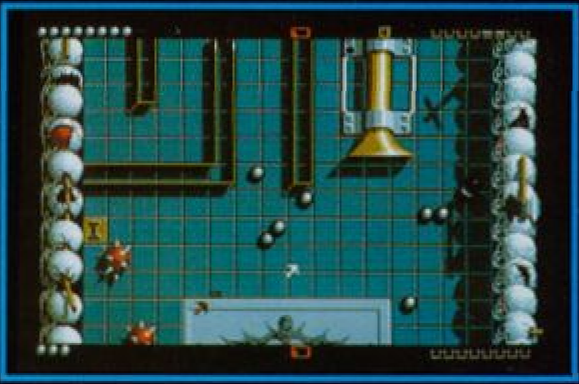

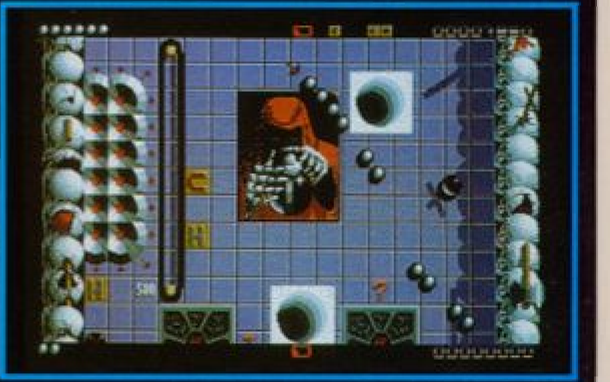

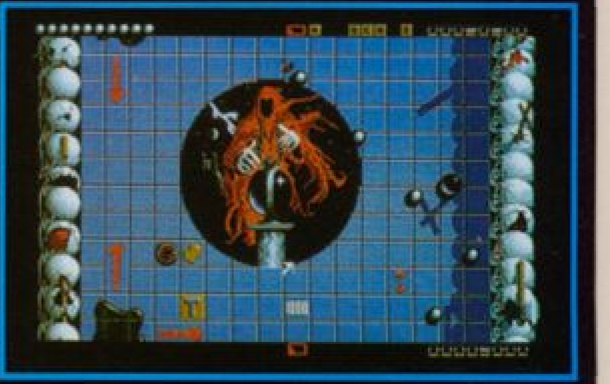

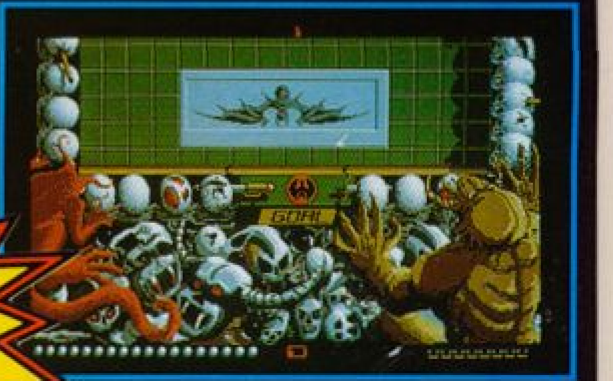

NOW Released on PC & C64

BALLISTIX
It's a whole new ball game!

Sick of silly old soccer? Tired of pathetic pinball? Then you need a dose of *Ballistix* – the fastest, wackiest, toughest ball game yet to appear on a computer. *Ballistix* just explodes with excitement, puzzles and an amazing **130 different screens** of frenetic action, on the PC, Atari ST and Amiga. On the C64 version there are **64 screens**.

The aim of the game is simple; score more goals than your opponent to win the match. Doing it is a different matter as **splitters** fill the screen with dozens of balls, **tunnels** hide them from view, **bumpers** bounce balls all over the show, fiendish **red arrows** speed them up to almost impossible velocity, **magnets** pull them away from your control, and much, much more.

Ballistix is incredibly flexible, too. You can play against the computer or another player, set the speed if you can't stand the pace, define where the balls are fired and their velocity, rack up bonuses that will get you extra goals and then, at the end of an exhausting game, set your name in pride of place on the high-score table. And it's all played to the accompaniment of a throbbing sound-track and a crowd that applauds your every goal.

Ballistix is definitely not a game for wimps. It's tough, fast, challenging and incredibly competitive - in fact, it's just the kind of game you like.

AMIGA/ATARI ST £19.95 PC £24.95 C64 DISK £12.99/CASS. £9.99

Screen Shots taken from the Amiga version

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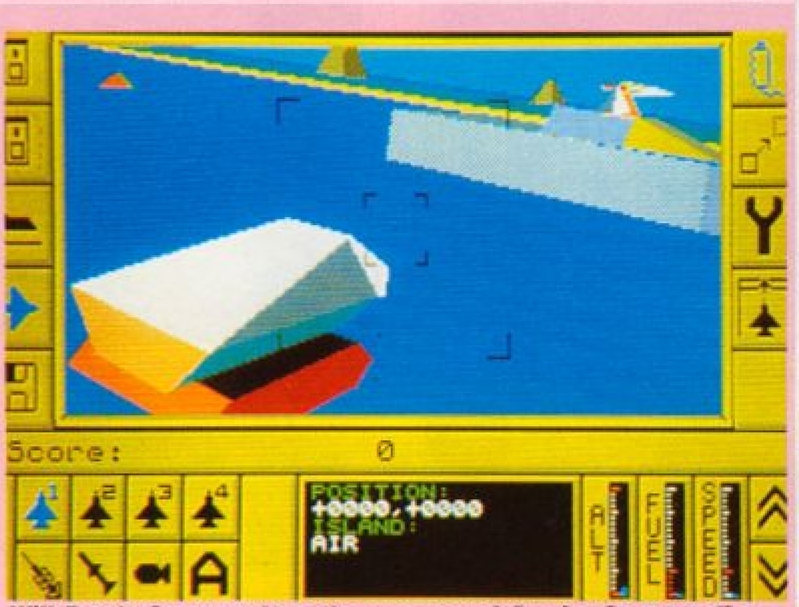
ACE NEWS

COMMAND PERFORMANCE

Realtime Games Software's long due, but eagerly awaited, follow-up to the gaming classic *Carrier Command* should be out next March. The game is to be called *Battle Command*, and although it places the player in a futuristic tank, the guys at Realtime are keen to stress that "it is not a tank simulation". Instead, *Battle Command* is in the *Carrier Command* tradition using a multi-stage game format with approximately 30 mission scenarios, which the player must complete before the "final encounter". Just what the final encounter is, the guys at Realtime aren't saying at this stage, but suffice to say that with up to 32 missions to complete there should be plenty to keep even the hardened tank commander happy!



Will *Battle Command* top the success of *Carrier Command*?

Battle Command has already been under development on mainly 16-bit formats for the past 18 months, with Realtime making improvements to the un-improvable *Carrier Command*. These "tweaks" include far more complex solid 3D graphics with highly detailed objects, and a better gameplay combination of strategy and shoot'em-up.

LOCK AND LOAD

Are you worried about the increase in micro thefts? Can you bear to leave your micro unprotected? Are you sick of your kid brother borrowing your computer?

Well Homeguard UK may have the perfect solution to your troubles with the Audio and Video Guard anti-theft alarm. This a compact security device used to protect electric appliances (micros, videos, hi-fi's) that are permanently connected to the mains.

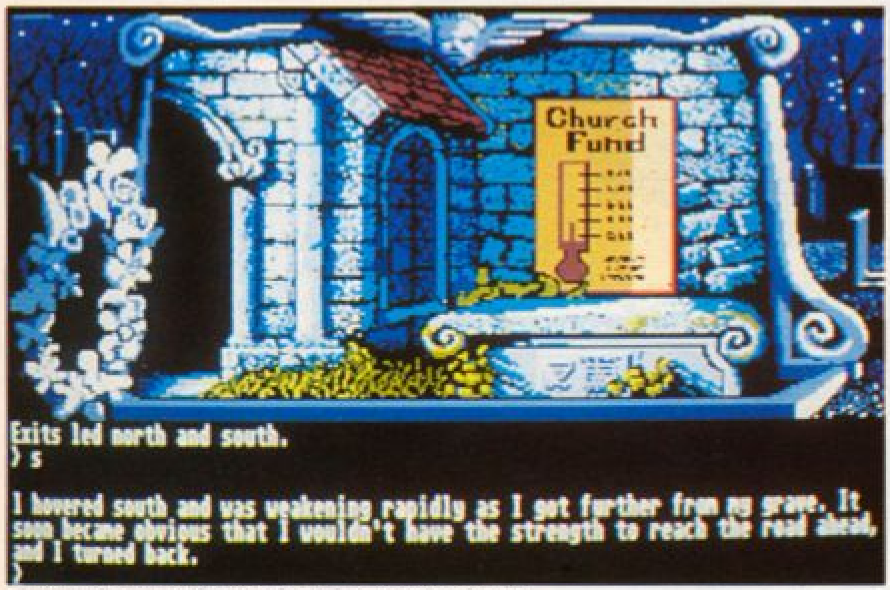
The unit uses a electromagnetic current sensing strip to detect if the power to your appliance has been switched off, unplugged or had its cable cut (ouch). Any of these actions would result in a load piercing alarm lasting 45 seconds.

The unit runs off a P33 battery, costs £14.95 and can be obtained from Homeguard UK on 0327 78874.

TEXT GAME OVER?

Trolls, hobbits, dragons, and gnomes staged a mass demonstration outside Level 9's offices last night, following the news that Britain's best known fantasy software house have announced their last traditional adventure title.

'It's true', said Pete Austin, addressing a militant crowd with hair between the toes, 'We shall not be releasing any more adventures, unless Scapeghost (reviewed this issue, p.145) sells much better than expected. There have been so many good adventures written over the past few years that producing new ones which will sell in any quantity is getting more and more difficult.'



```
Exits led north and south.
> s
I hovered south and was weakening rapidly as I got further from my grave. It
soon became obvious that I wouldn't have the strength to reach the road ahead,
and I turned back.
>
```

***Scapeghost*: reviewed in this month's issue**

Narrowly avoiding a fireball from a distressed cleric, Austin went on to reminisce about The Age of The Adventure. 'Our favourite game, not including our own, of course, had to be an Infocom title...' (loud sniggers from a small group of Leather Goddesses) '...Trinity...' (shrieks of indignation from the same), '...and our favourite Level 9 titles were Ingrid's Back and, of the older games, Dungeon Adventure.'

As grown hobbits broke down and wept, Austin conceded that times were changing; 'We released Collossal Adventure back in 1981. Since then it's sold around fifty thousand copies. We still get orders for it, but only a couple a week and those are mostly from people wanting to complete their collections. Nowadays everyone wants animated graphics and arcade action. However the time will come when tactile feedback and headsets will give the adventure format a new lease of life...'

Meanwhile, at another rally nearby, Anita Sinclair of Magnetic Scrolls, producers of The Pawn and Guild of Thieves, was declaiming exultantly about the future of the very same game format that Pete Austin claimed was dying. 'Of course there's a future for the text adventure,' she cried, 'There will be a whole sheaf of adventure titles from Magnetic Scrolls coming out next year. The first will appear in March next year and will be a true Magnetic Scrolls fantasy. It will the the start of the text adventure, not the end...'

Whooping excitedly, Ms Sinclair was then carried off into the night shoulder-high by several black-leather-clad orcs. The apparent death of the text adventure appears, therefore, to be somewhat in doubt...

THE GREATEST SHOW ON EARTH

At long last there is a computer show devoted to you – the gamesplayer. There won't be a business machine in sight at next year's European Computer Entertainment Show – the only computer show dedicated solely to games.

ECES is sponsored by ACE and our sister publications *The One*, *C+VG*, *Commodore User* and *Sinclair User*. Each magazine will run a special event during the show, such as *C+VG* organising the World Computer Gaming Championship in conjunction with leading software company US Gold. Of course ACE will be running its own event – we'll keep you informed with further details over the coming months.

All of the leisure industries big names like Ocean, US Gold and Psygnosis will be at ECES, showing you their latest games software – the chart-topping titles of Christmas 1990.

THE
EUROPEAN
COMPUTER
ENTERTAINMENT
SHOW
1990

In effect, ECES has taken over the PC Show – the computer industries premier show. "ECES will be more of a festival than an exhibition," said the show's enthusiastic spokesperson Dean Barrett, "we will get the excitement back into the computer entertainment industry." ECES will be extensively covered on TV and in the national press, acting as a much needed forum for computer entertainment.

The European Computer Entertainment Show will be held at Earls Court from 13th-16th September, 1990. We look forward to seeing you there...

WE ARE GLASS

You could be playing your favourite game on your window, patio door or car windscreen if Pilkington Glass' predictions for the next decade become reality.

In its Fenestration 2000 report, Pilkington believes the information technology and building construction industries will merge together to produce hi-tech buildings in the true cyberpunk style. This sci-fi projection adds up to video or TV pictures and computer data being displayed on an "average" sheet of glass producing a high resolution flat-screen colour display of "photographic" quality. You can see ACE's predicitions for games on glass in the free pull-out wall-chart in this issue.

We can't wait to hear the double-glazing salesperson pitch for this one...

EXTRA TIME FOR KICK OFF

Kick Off, probably the best football simulation available and one of the best games released this year, is about to gain a new lease of life thanks to the release of an *Extra Time* Expansion Disk.

Extra Time is designed to appeal both average and seasoned *Kick Off* player alike, thanks

CUTE COIN-OP CRAZE

The next time you go into the arcades for a bit of mindless electronic violence, you may face cutesy balls of plastic fluff instead of *Operation Blood'n'Guts Terminator*.

At least that's the theory many Japanese coin-op manufactures are subscribing to. The evidence to back this statement up came with the JAMMA coin-op show in Japan last month, when over 50% of the attractions on show consisted of cutesy novelty games (like the one where you hit lovable characters over the head with a mallet) and children's playrides, as opposed to the latest in turbo 68000, multi-blitter games decks. The JAMMA show has traditionally been the place to see "next year's" coin-op blockbusters.

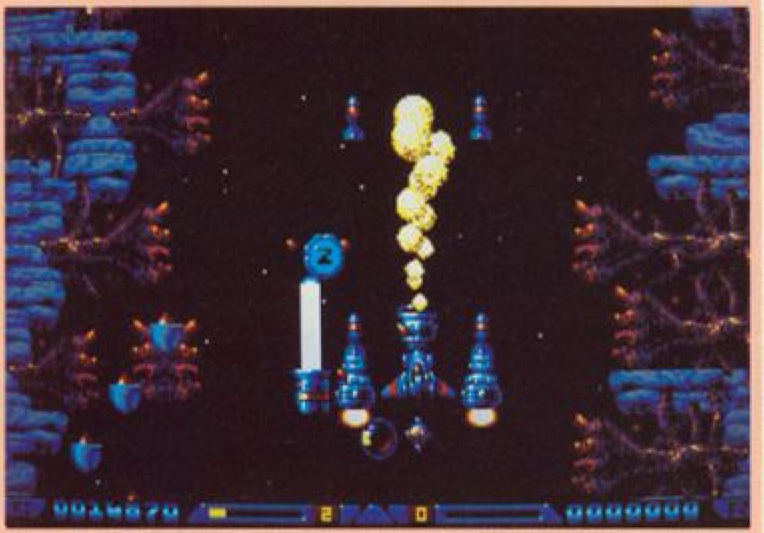
The reason behind the decline in arcade electronic entertainment? Most probably a lack in originality – after all when was the last time you played a new coin-op which wasn't a shoot'em-up, beat'em-up or racing game? Over the past three years, coin-op manufactures have not so much improved upon the gameplay, as the electronic audio-visual trickery that's there to impress you into forking out £1 per game. Of course, there are a few exceptions – but these just help to prove the rule.

So what of the future? Coin-op electronic games will still be there – there will just be fewer of them, and as a consequence they will be of a higher standard and perhaps a little more more original – which is ultimately what we all want, yes?

As for the home micro scene which has followed the coin-op industry very closely – indeed a little too closely – over the past three years, many software publishers are gleefully looking forward to having the chance to produce superior computer games as a result of the coin-op's decline in numbers. In fact, one leading industry figure told ACE: "there will be an emphasis away from coin-op conversions towards RPG and strategy computer games – and our company is perfectly poised for such a change in the games market".

It looks as though gamers will not so much be spoilt for choice, as spoilt for quality and originality – we'll have to wait and see, but in the meantime why not write to ACE and tell us your views: Coin-op confrontation, ACE Letters, Priory Court, 30-32 Farringdon Lane, London EC1R 3AU.

XENON II MEGABLASTS ONTO PC



Xenon II, the chart-topping Bitmap Brothers blaster is going to make it onto the PC later this month. The 910-Rated Amiga version of *Xenon II* was reviewed in ACE issue 25, and quote: "stretches the Amiga further than any shoot'em-up has ever stretched it before".

PC *Xenon II* should match the quality of the ST and Amiga versions and will probably become *the* PC shoot'em-up. We we can't wait to hear the Bomb the Bass Megablast soundtrack through our PC speaker...

ACE DREAM MAC-HINE

What piece of hardware have ACE editorial been drooling over this month? Is it the Lynx, Konix or PC Engine 2? No, it's the new Apple Mac Portable! But why would a bunch of games freaks be interested in a top powered 16MHz CMOS 68000 portable computer with 1.44Mb SuperDrive, 1Mb RAM, optional 40Mb hard disk, 6502 just to handle power management, and the crispest display to be seen on any portable micro? Easy, the Mac plays the best game of *Tetris* this side of the Nintendo Game Boy. Then there's *Cosmic Osmo* and *Crystal Quest*, and wouldn't it be great to lay out the ACE pages on the way to work, and of course the pose rating of using a Mac on the train goes right off the scale. So what stops us from all going out and getting one today? That's even easier – the whopping gigantic asking price of £3995 to £4495 – that's what! But we can dream can't we?

to a whole host of new features including: full control over the power of shots, headers and chips; player control of the goalie when taking a goal-kick; four more team tactics to choose from; four new playing surfaces – Hard, Wet, Soggy and Artificial; players can select their team from a squad of twenty; and there's a new set of refs to encounter.

Extra Time costs £9.95 for ST and Amiga, obviously requires the original *Kick Off* disk, and should be available later this month. Meanwhile, Anco has also launched another football-sim, *Player Manager* (see page 40 for a brilliant competition to celebrate its launch) and is currently working on *Kick Off 2*, due out sometime next year.

Microprose's Wild Bill out headhunting.

WHO'S IN THE HOUSE?

Mega bucks US software company, Microprose is setting up its own in-house programming team in the UK. The house crew should consist of about 5-6 programmers devoting themselves to ST and Amiga conversions of Stateside Microprose's popular PC products like *F-19 Stealth Fighter*, *F-15 Strike Eagle II* and *M1 Tank Platoon*. In fact, *F-19 Stealth Fighter* should be the first off the conversion line with an Amiga *F-19* due next month and a ST version following in January or February.

What this should mean to you is more ST and Amiga conversions – faster!

But according to a Microprose spokesperson, the reason behind this move into personal proggie possession is simple: Microprose doesn't want its valuable PC source code to go walkies outside the company – and our UK programmers can apparently show the Yanks a thing or two when it comes to programming the ST and Amiga.

As ACE goes to press, Microprose is just on the point of signing up software development house Core Design to produce the follow up to the immensely successful *Rick Dangerous*. Imaginatively titled, *Rick Dangerous 2* this sequel will see our hero in space – up against more puzzles and action. It should be available sometime in the Spring.

BARGAIN 286 PC

Atari has launched a price busting 286 PC for an amazing starting price of £599.99 ex VAT. The Atari ABC 286 is the first in a new range of low cost Atari PC's, and comes with a single 3.5" disk drive, 1Mb RAM, motherboard expansion and 3 other expansion slots. The starting price is for the CPU only, other options include: CPU & EGA mono monitor (£699.99 ex VAT), CPU & 30Mb hard disk (£799.99 ex VAT) and CPU, 30Mb hard disk & EGA mono monitor (£899.99 ex VAT).

The price of higher powered 286 and 386 PC's are starting to tumble, and hopefully other PC manufactures will take Atari's lead in reducing prices further. This could help the predicted rise of the PC as a serious contender in the games machine stakes over the coming year, as PC games software sales start to seriously compete with those of the ST and Amiga.

CHESS GOES ONLINE

Prestel has introduced a new service catering for online Chess enthusiasts. The ChessBox Club is designed to cater for 'correspondence' chess players, but offers a faster, more reliable and more economic alternative to conventional postal chess.

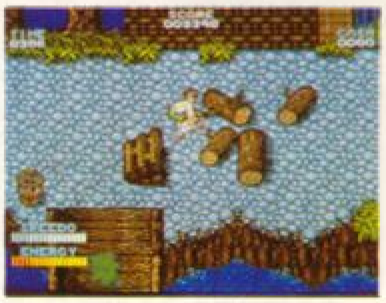
The ChessBox Club is affiliated to the British Chess Federation (BCF) and The British Postal Chess Federation, and ChessMatch will host an annual tournament, in close conjunction with the BCF, from January 1990 onwards. Other ChessBox Club services include ChessMate (where members are put in touch with each other) and ChessMoves (a news, reviews, event diary and game results information desk).

Subscription to ChessBox Club is free of charge to Prestel users, for further details contact Dialcom on Freephone 0800 200 700.

GREMLIN ON SKIDZ ROW

Gremlin is counting on skateboarding and BMXing still being "in" this month, with the release of *Skidz*, a BMX and skateboard simulation with just one simple task – you have to become the "hippest and smartest kid in town". *Skidz* is played over 7 levels and 7 days with you riding either a BMX bike or skateboard through city streets, parks, canal ways, beaches and construction sites while encountering the likes of thugs, cats, grannies, tramps and joggers. *Skidz* is out later this month on ST and Amiga for £19.99, with the Amiga version using a full-screen overscan display. *Skidz* is also under development on the Nintendo console, which is scheduled for release sometime next year.

Gremlin should also have *Footballer of the Year II* and *Ultimate Golf* out this month on various formats, though *Ramrod* – the experimental game featured back in ACE issue 1 – has been delayed (again) to sometime in 1990.



GAME BOY HEADS FOR 5 MILLION

Nintendo's Game Boy hand-held console is enjoying phenomenal success in Japan and the States with Nintendo looking set to ship four to five million units next year. So far this year, Nintendo has already shipped 1.1 million Game Boys, because Japanese and American kids are going "crazy " over playing portable *Super Mario Bros.* and *Tetris.*

Nintendo GAME BOY

SOFT HOUSE

New sound sampling techniques, combined with the falling price of dedicated MIDI music peripherals, is giving a new lease of life to game soundtracks.

Currently, sampled sound tracks on games like Blood Money and Xenon II require considerable amounts of memory, even when compression techniques are used. At the same time, these games are proving that the multi-channel stereo noise is a real turn-on for gamesters and an important part of the playing experience. So what's to be done?

Sierra On-Line have for some time been producing games with MIDI soundtracks that will drive certain Roland and Yamaha modules. These make the normal Xenon-type tracks sound pretty puny by comparison when output through a suitable set-up. You can check out the hardware side in this month's issue on page 123.

Not all of us, however, can afford £200+ for a MIDI sound system. Good news then that Rainbow Arts have developed a new sampling system for including more sampled music in games using less space. The software system first breaks up the sampled track into sections, having scanned it for repetitions and redundancy. It then stores each section as an indexed file. The sound track program simply selects the sections it needs in the order defined by the sound track file.

As a result, claims Teut Weidemann of Rainbow Arts, you'll be able to play Rainbow Arts games with immensely long sampled sound tracks without having to fork out for the extra disks that might otherwise be involved, or buy memory expansions for your machine.

Expect even more radical sound improvements when we move over to CD-ROM, which shares a common data format with the standard CD audio system.

IT'S A S.T.U.N.N.E.R.

Hot on the heels of the coin-op's UK debut last month at the Associated Leisure Preview trade show, Domark has signed up the home *micro conversion rights to Atari Games' latest coin-op.*

S.T.U.N. Runner is a futuristic ride-type game, placing you in control of a 21st century billion dollar racing vehicle with the power to reach speeds in excess of 900mph. Your machine is equipped with powerful lasers and shockwaves which will stop everything in their tracks. Perhaps the most stunning (ouch!) feature of *S.T.U.N. Runner* is its realistic polygon generated 3D visuals.

Commenting on the acquisition, Domark's joint managing director, Mark Strachan told ACE: "This is a marvellous game and is destined to be a major coin-op licence later next year. Rather than being completely brilliant... it's completely S.T.U.N.N.I.N.G."

S.T.U.N. Runner should be out later next year on all major formats. In the meantime, you'll just have to make do with Domark's *Hard Drivin'* coin-op conversion – widely tipped as this year's front runner for Christmas Number One. Take a look at next month's Screentest to see if we agree...

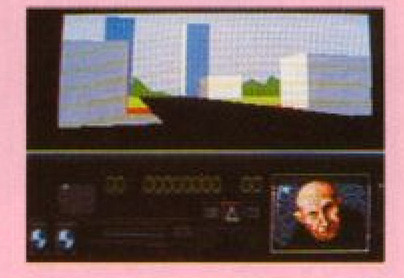
S.T.U.N. RUNNER

Atari S.T.U.N.S the coin-op competition

ALL ACTION LOGOTRON

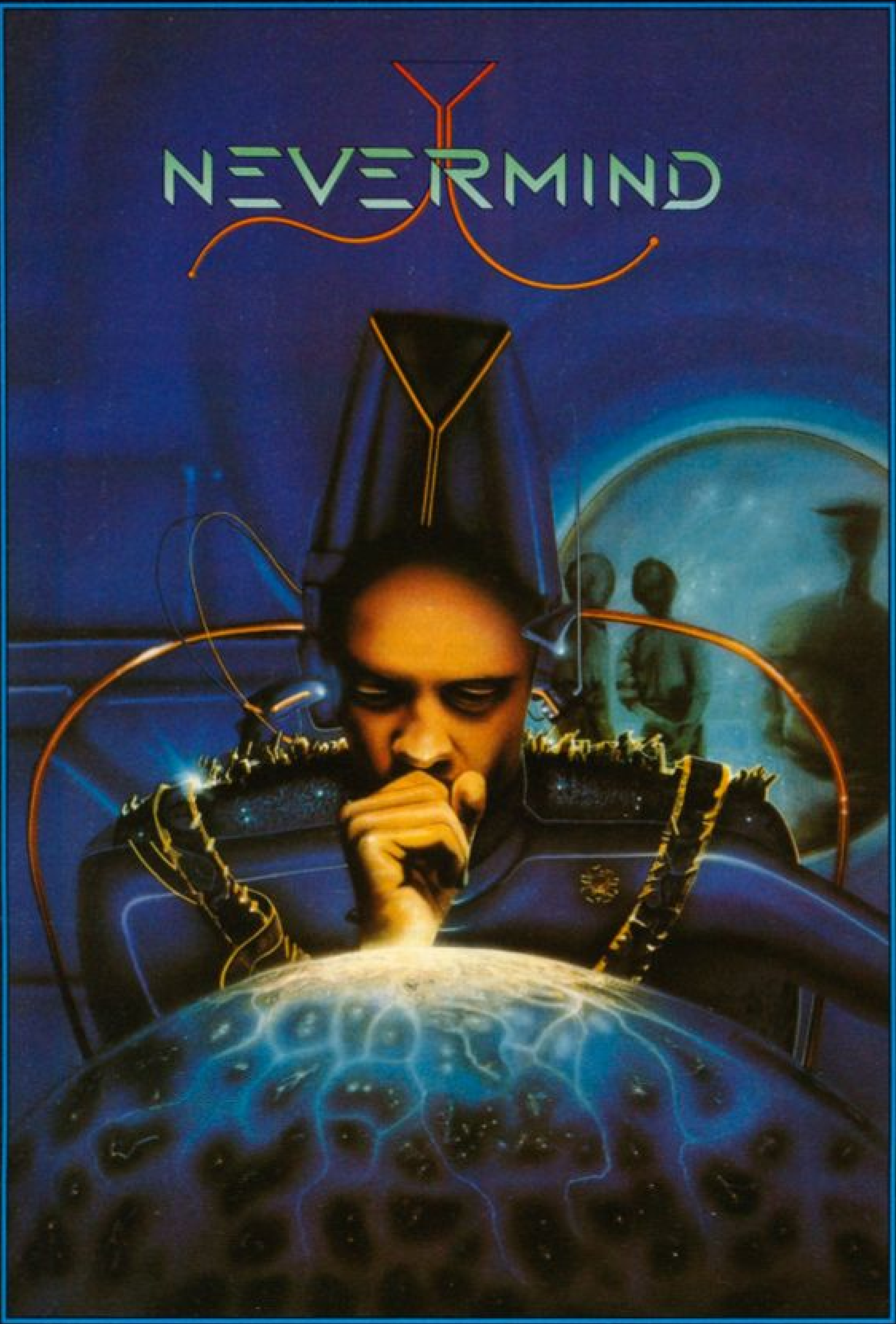
Logotron, the software developer responsible for the excellent *Xor* and *Archipelagos* strategy games, is currently working on a number of "action" titles due for release between now and Spring 1990.

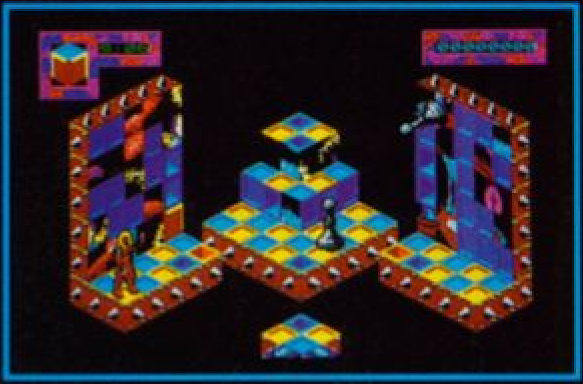
Probably the most exciting release is *Resolution 101* (current working title), which is being programmed by Astral Software, the team behind *Archipelagos*. The game itself is a futuristic vehicle simulation featuring a combination of 3D vector graphics and high-speed sprites used to produce a believable sci-fi cityscape. During play, you'll have to hunt down villains for a bounty – which may sound easy enough, but as you wade through the scum of the city, each thug will getter progressively tougher and smarter. To help your fight against crime you'll be able to upgrade your craft with extra armour and armaments and even vehicle type – the most desirable of which is the all-terrain amphibious craft.

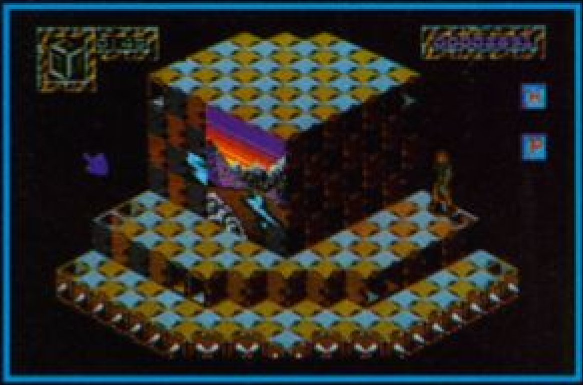


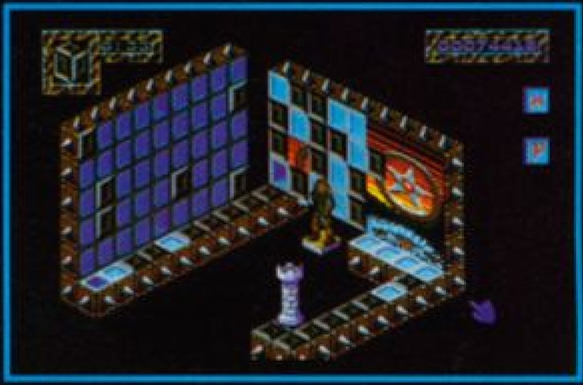
The game is a sort of cross between the John Carpenter film *Escape from New York* and the cult board game *Battle Cars*. ACE saw a running demo a couple of weeks back and it's looking hotter than *Archipelagos* – with better graphics and far more gameplay action. Expect to see it on ST, Amiga and PC during Spring 1990.

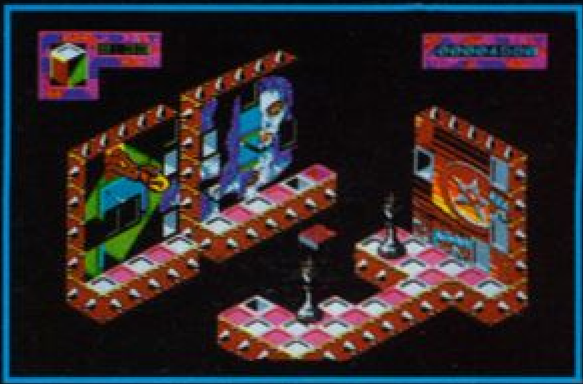
Logotron is also planning to release *Archipelagos* on the Mac, "due to the high levels of American demand". No dates or prices though.











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Screen Shots taken from the Amiga and PC Versions

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PSYCLAPSE

PSYGNOSIS
GAMES PEOPLE PLAY

ACE LETTERS

A DREAM MACHINE, TROUBLE WITH THE WIFE, AND A 24 MILE LONG COMMS CABLE (OH YEAH??) AND OTHER INSPIRED MISSIVES. DON'T FORGET, THESE CORRESPONDENTS AREN'T YOUR AVERAGE PIMPLY WALLIES, THEY'RE *ACE READERS*...AND THAT MEANS THEY'RE A CUT ABOVE THE NORM. HONESTLY...

THROMBOBO LAMENT

I was wondering if you could solve a mystery for me. What has happened to the Pink Pages section of your magazine now that you have been taken over. Where has N'GAR THROMBOBO suddenly disappeared to? And what has become of the excellent section on Games Design? I appreciate that there must have been quite a lot of confusion caused by the takeover and I hope these features return to the magazine as soon as possible.

While we are on the subject of solving mysteries, could you please tell me whatever happened to an old computer magazine called Home Computing Weekly? I used to get every issue when I owned my Texas T199/4A computer, but it suddenly disappeared after issue 133. This magazine used to have a story called Ron Complex (a fine piece of prose) which was left in the air by the magazine's disappearance, and I still have not recieved my prize for having a letter printed in issue 119. I hope that N'GAR THROMBOBO is not left in mid-air as poor Ron Complex was.

Onto new subjects, and the letter that you received from Serge Diekstra in issue 23. What an intelligent person this dutchman is, but there is one thing that stops me from from doing the same as he, fellow users. I now own an Atari ST, but I am the only person in my area who I know owns one. Serge's suggestion (to form a small collective amongst your friends for buying software. Ed.) is a good one, but I feel it could only work for Commodore 64 and Spectrum owners in this country at the present moment. I suppose that I will just have to wait until the ST becomes more affordable to the general public.

Now, to something which has been eating away at my brain for quite some weeks. When will FERRARI FORMULA ONE be released on the ST? I have driven myself crazy waiting for this superb game to be released. According to magazines it should have been released some months ago, and yet I still have not seen it in any of my local software shops. Keep up the good work, and I hope you keep up the same standards now that you have been taken over.

Neil Luckman, Birmingham

Thanks for the good wishes, Neil. The ACE move to London has occasioned a lot of administrative difficulty for us (mostly to do with prize-winners, to whom we offer our sincere apologies), but we're now sorting out the problems. One of the reasons why I was so keen (as one of the original editors) to work for the new owners is because I knew they had the financial resources to support the magazine in the long term. You'll be seeing the results of this over the next few issues as we have articles from America, Japan, and Russia – as well as continuing to commission the best writers we can find in the UK. As far as ST owners are concerned, I suspect that there are more out there than you think...

POST HASTE

I recently had to send some of my game disks back to their respective manufacturers after they had crashed and ceased to load. the responses I had were very interesting. I posted all the disks on a Friday morning.

Gremlin Graphics were first to the post (pardon the pun!) on Monday with a nice letter, a new disk, and all sent by 1st class post. Incredible! And what a brilliant example of good PR. I will now always look on GG as a proficient and professional company.

Ocean were second a few days later with a large bag of posters and a new disk. Well done again to Ocean.

Vortex were third – a week after GG, with just the disk and a compliments slip. Acceptable...

Telecomsoft (Microprose, to be exact) came in fourth and fifth place over two weeks later with a letter stating that I personally had damaged the software and would have to pay £5.00 for the replacement service that I required. I reluctantly wrote a cheque and am now waiting for a reply. I only hope that the aforementioned get a grip on themselves for their own benefit and that of the consumer.

P. Biancheri, London.

Frankly, we were amazed at the response by all the people you contacted. Two weeks isn't a bad response time in most consumer areas (don't you watch That's Life? Some people wait years!). In fact, considering the workload Microprose now have with no less than five new labels to support (Microstyle, Microstatus, Rainbird, Silverbird, and Firebird) we reckon two weeks is pretty good. As for the £5.00, it does seem a bit tough. However, you say in your letter that more than one of your game disks has corrupted. Are you sure you don't have a dodgy drive?

CONSOLE WAR

As the hand-held console war hots up between Nintendo's 'bog-standard' Gameboy and Atari's all-singing, all-dancing colour offering, the situation as it stands seems suspiciously familiar. Doesn't this in some way remind you of several previous battle fought in computing history? How about:

1. Spectrum vs C64
2. ST vs. Amiga
3. Nintendo vs. Sega

There you have three cases of technically superior machines losing out to marketing muscle. Now although none of these compare with something like the killing of Betamax by VHS, they all illustrate the fact that money makes a machine, not specification. Looking at the above examples, it seems that Commodore are a notable victim of marketing mistakes, with Nintendo riding high selling their converted shoe-boxes like hot cakes. Doesn't it make you sick?Now, I'm not slamming the Spectrum of ST (honestly) r the Nintendo (well...) but you've GOT to admit that, on paper, they all lose out – in the marketplace, though, they didn't.

OLD GAMES NEVER DIE

PRIZE
LETTER

Here's a desperate plea from an ex-Sptectrum turned Atari ST owner. Is it possible that conversions of such Speccy classics such as The Lords of Midnight trilogy, Skooldaze, Tir-Na-Nog and countless others may eventually surface as conversions on the ST?

It may seem backward to do this, but couldn't either exact or updated versions be released on PD or compilations? Hardly a day goes by without me pining over Dun Darach or The Hobbit. I'm sure the software houses could make plenty of extra dosh from it.

Nick Peers, Powys

We're with you all the way on this one, Nick. There are some games (not many, but you've certainly pinpointed a couple) who's magic never dies (cue romantic violin sounds). Software houses should really get their act together on this. We checked with Microprose, who now own the rights to the Lords of Midnight trilogy, but they say that programmer Mike Singleton is currently too busy to do the conversions. We'll press ahead with this campaign and keep readers informed as to the results...Personally I'd travel several miles for a good 16-bit PacMan at £9.99.

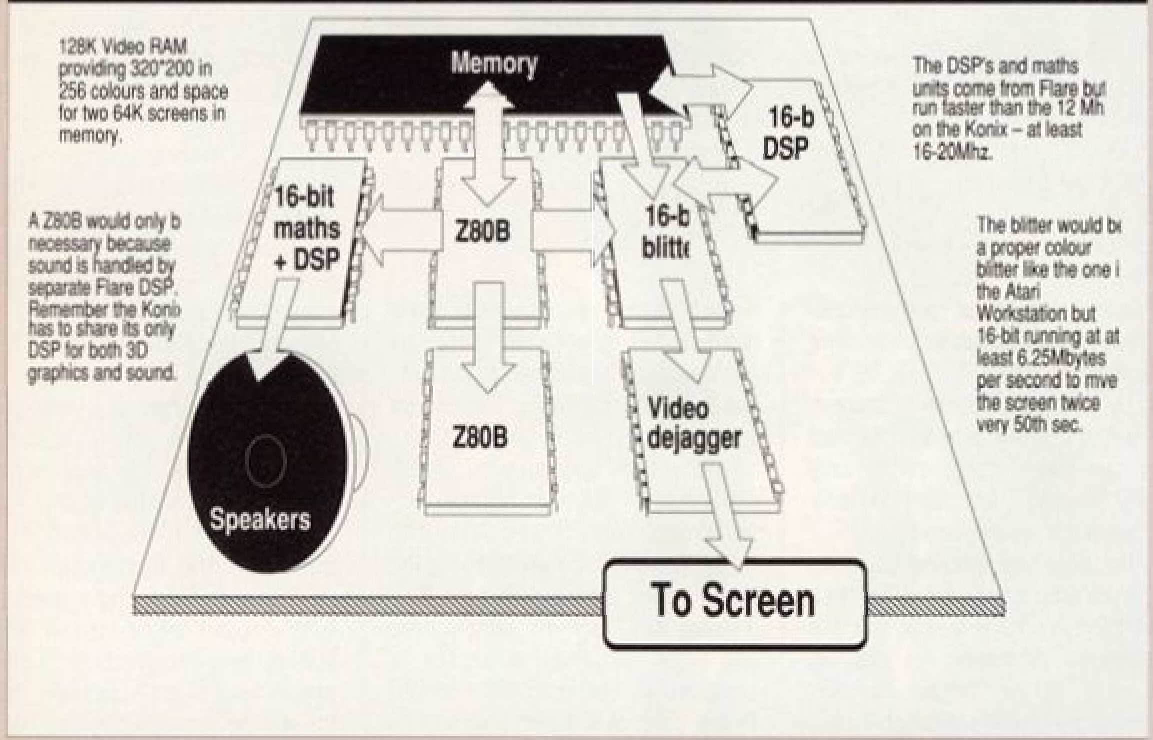
ACE CHALLENGED

Having studied your ideas and specs for a games machine of the 90's which you hope the industry will produce, I would like to add my comments, ideas, and constructive criticism.

First, your tech spec seems impractical: it's not just the complexity of your machine, it's the cost as well. Your machine has 1Mb of RAM, two 32-bit processors, disk drive etc. A machine like this would be hard pushed to squeeze in at under a grand at current costs – although I do agree about the de-jagger chip to get the maximum out of the PAL TV standard

Here's my tech spec:

Mark Westwood's Dream Machine



128K Video RAM providing 320*200 in 256 colours and space for two 64K screens in memory.

A Z80B would only b necessary because sound is handled by separate Flare DSP. Remember the Konix has to share its only DSP for both 3D graphics and sound.

The DSP's and maths units come from Flare but run faster than the 12 Mh on the Konix – at least 16-20Mhz.

The blitter would b a proper colour blitter like the one i the Atari Workstation but 16-bit running at at least 6.25Mbytes per second to mve the screen twice very 50th sec.

Clearly this machine can be realistically built within a short time span – most of the technology is there.

As for price, well, if you compare it with the Multi-System (about £220), it looks more expensive because it has an extra DSP and is more sophisticated. It also runs faster, but chips are usually cheap – it's RAM that costs the money. The Multi-System has more RAM, complex control mechanisms, an 8086 16-bit central processor which is almost redundant on the system anyway, and an 880k drive built in.

My design would be credit card style operated – these can currently hold 2 megabytes. A large card socket would allow for future 4-8Mbyte games. The machine would be priced at between £150-250, and future add-ons would include a yoke-style controller like the Konix and a CD-ROM interface as on the PC Engine.

The casing design would be a sleek box like the MegaDrive – Wyn Holloway of Konix said the MegaDrive is a '...great games machine, but it's just a box.' I would say the MultiSystem is a great games machine but it is a toilet seat!

Mark Westwood, Barnsley

Our intention in issuing the ACE Challenge was not to to start a debate amongst users (who are the only people who's opinion really matters, surely?) about the hardware we're sold to play and program our games on. We certainly seem to be succeeding! However, with regard to Mark's suggestions, we would like to point out that the analogue control mechanism on the Konix is more important for gameplay than he suggests. Perhaps Flare have something to say about this?

Which brings us to Atari, Nintendo, and the impending handheld war. And this is where it gets interesting. Both Nintendo AND Atari have in the past ended up marketing their products against a technically better machine and beating it (although the Amiga is now catching up) so how will this battle end?

Both these companies are big corporations and this is certainly the first time two giants of such size have had to compete against each other. Looking at the two machines, it is blatantly obvious to anyone that the Atari stands head and shoulders about the Gameboy, so will this be a first? Will justice be done? Will we actually see the better machine win for a change?

Richard Heasman, Buntingford

The machines we buy certainly have more to do with marketing and other factors than with tech specs. However, you've missed one vital element: quality of software. The reason Nintendo triumphed over Sega in Japan (and then elsewhere) was due as much to Super Mario Bros as it was to marketing skills. And the Gameboy has Super Marioland....

However, we agree that the Atari Lynx is by far the more interesting machine technically. Whether the software matches up or not remains to be seen. Check out our hand-helds article coming soon...

C64 IN AMIGA ROLE

Can you tell me if there is any way the C64 can run Amiga games – i.e. upgrading memory, or sending it somewhere to have it made compatible with any 16-bit machines?

Also, as a role-player, I disagree with the term Computer Role-Playing Games. An RPG is a game in which you use your imagination to create your surroundings, and in those surroundings you can do almost anything. Whereas in a CRPG you're enclosed by menus and icons and are limited in what you can do. Unless someone teaches a computer to understand English, it well never be role-playing, it will be a menu-driven graphic adventure. Another thing – in an RPG you have the chance to keep your character and get to know him/her as if they were real. I feel you can't do this in a CRPG.

Matthew Benson, Sanbach

As far as your first question goes, the answer is definitely no. You would need a different (16-bit 68000) processor, a whole host of support chips, and a different keyboard. In other words, you need an Amiga...It is sometimes possible to run games for 8-bit machines on 16-bit ones using software emulation (which makes the more powerful micro 'pretend' to be an 8-bit weakling) but the opportunities are limited and the results usually disappointing.

As for CRPG's, you can store your characters in most of these games and develop them over a long period. In some games (Bards Tale, Wizardry, and some Ultima games) you can even transport the characters into different games from different publishers. CRPG's are developing very fast, so I wouldn't write them off just yet.

11-PLUS QUESTION

In the special twenty-fourth issue of ACE, which is usually a splendid read, the reason given for the pathetically small Adventure and Helpline sections is shortage of space. The completely ordinary twenty-third issue had twenty-four more pages. Discuss.

Phil Armstrong, Gateshead

Ahem. Yes, there were some delays in re-building the adventure section, but I don't think you'll be complaining from now on – five glorious pages in this *month's issue – and more to come every month in future.*

Magazines are printed in 'sections' and the size varies during the production cycle, so that you sometimes find a section either increasing in size or decreasing after various articles have been written. This can result in pages being either inserted or removed from sections at short notice prior to printing. Most of the time you wouldn't notice, but then you would be a clever dick, wouldn't you?!

CRASH LANDING

Your 'Learn to Fly' competition in the October issue caught my attention, especially the picture of the aeroplane on the cover.

Being the Editor of a magazine relating to this type of aircraft, I hope that the prize won't be in this North American SNJ-5 (The SNJ was the US Navy version of the famous Harvard trainer) because for £600 you will only have an hour and fifteen minutes flying time!

As to the point of your typesetting and proof-reading, I think the readers should know that it takes a lot of time and work to produce a magazine and however hard you check the print, the odd mistake is always bound to creep in.

One word though, in the Konix article you state: 'Push the controller forward and your craft rises, push the controller towards you and the craft descends...'

I don't know what you are trying to fly, but when I do go flying, pushing the stick forward lowers the nose the plane, and pulling back raises it.

M.J.Pengelly, Cornwall

Ooops! No wonder we kept digging holes at the end of the runway! A classic ACE boo-boo, indeed. As for the typos, we're still taking on more staff and each issue gets better as we get more time, but in the meantime thank you everyone for your patience.

CYNIC

After reading J.J.Boggis' letter concerning the linking of two computers for head-to-head games, I decided to try out a similar scheme with a friend of mine.

Anyhow, I bought the necessary 48 miles of connecting cable, and bound that by winding the cable around 24 miles of telephone wires connecting our houses, we could have a fun – if slightly slow – game of professional dominoes. Unfortunately nothing else worked.

By the way, readers interested in this scheme should note that the necessary cable costs only £795 (ex VAT), although the protective outer cable is extra.

I'm now considering purchasing a similar cable for a joystick extension in order to cut out the annoyance of having to walk all the way to his house to play Gauntlet II – there's a catch in this somewhere, but I can't think what it is.

Richard Head, Heathdon

There's always a cynic somewhere.

SNIPPETS

Why can I only fit 23 copies into two binders?

Dave Brown, BFPO8

It's not that the binders are thin, it's that the mag's are so thick!

I have got every issue of ACE since number one, but what happened to issue Number 25, October 89? I checked the shops every weekend in Bristol but no-one had it. Can you please send me details on how to get a copy?

K.Bartlett, Bristol

I'm afraid a printer's error resulted in a shortfall of copies for this issue, and as a result it sold out. For this issue and others since October '87 you can order back-copies from ACE Back Issues Dept, POB 500, Leicester, LE99 0AA. Each issue will set you back £1.50 (postage included).

DOG HOUSE

Once again, my wife and I are not talking. How does this concern ACE, you may well ask...

Picture the scenario (I dreamt up a ludicrously bizarre game description to protect the guilty):

Having had a pretty naff day in the mundane world of commercial mainframe programming, I return home to unwind over a gentle game on my Amiga and things are going well – Dido the Dodo has blasted, snorkelled, and ballooned his way though various levels of The Mauritius Story and has rescues seven of his extinct but well-preserved comrades from the clutches of Wally, the caretaker of the British Museum.

He is just reaching the end of Level 2-4 to face the giant and deadly hamster-spewing 'super prawn' end-of-level guardian with all three of his lives intact when in walks my wife to ask me how many baked beans I want for my tea. Eight seconds and three lives later and it's all over – the wife gets a volley of verbal abuse, plus several items of assorted hardware hurled at her, and I face the prospect of a silent evening and the same boring levels I've played several dozen times before.

Now I for one have the greatest respect for the pimply programmers who come up with these games in between doing the paper round and studying for their 11-plus but why do they ignore the most fundamental aspect of program design: user friendliness? In the case of a game that means the likelihood (or not) of its driving its player to distraction within ten minutes of it being opened.

Surely it is so easy to include a password system to allow access to the latest uncompleted level (or screen) of a game to allow play to continue (if desired) from that point, rather than forcing the hapless player to endure for the hundredth time having to play rounds that were long since mastered and no longer hold any challenge.

M.J.Crawley, Saltdean

This is being done by more and more programmers, but let's see more of it, eh, lads?

READY AND WAITING

I'd like to have a last word on the subject of games difficulty, which I first broached in my Prize Letter in the September issue. It is not that I am unable to complete games. For instance, I like some Psygnosis games. These are fun because each one has an interesting world to explore, peopled with brilliantly drawn aliens or monsters, and I have completed Brataccus, Barbarian, Obliterator, and Baal without the aid of cheats.

It is just that I dislike games, whether arcade or adventure, which seem boringly difficult for their own sake, and I do not share the sense of macho challenge which excites Jim Laver – although I notice that even he uses the Adventure Helpline, so his principles cannot be as unyielding as he makes out. For me, life and work has enough challenges as it is, without inventing more.

Since it is rarely possible to try games before buying, it is all too easy nowadays to pay out one's £20 or so and find that the only outcome is a lot of boring, repetitive hassle without any sense of interest or fun, such as mapping mazes, pondering for hours on bizarre puzzles, banging away mindlessly on the fire button, or moving sprites around monotonous landscapes, as in Infocom's Battletech, which I recently made the mistake of buying.

I disagree that all games must take the form of a challenge thrown down by the programmer, and I prefer the idea of exploratory hypergames mentioned in an article on the September issue. Jim Laver is right. I have given up, in the sense that I buy far fewer games than I might buy if I could obtain more entertainment from them. The money is waiting in my pocket if only the games industry would provide what I want.

Alan Hughes, Milton Keynes

CONSOLE CRITIQUE

I hear so much about the so-called 'console revolution' that is supposed to have occurred, yet still the computer is by far the more popular instrument. My personal view of the console is that for most people it is a waste of money.

What can be done by a console that cannot be done by a computer? Sound and graphics standards are easily matched by 16-bit games. And if you cannot afford a 16-bit machine just by an 8-bit one! The Commodore 64 is relatively cheap at around £150, and has a vastly superior range of software at much cheaper prices than any console, and, due to the 'closed shop' approach used by console manufacturers, this is likely to remain so.

Ian A. Inman, Stanley

Well, there's an idea – and one that Commodore would be delighted to support! However, I think you're underestimating the power of some of today's consoles.

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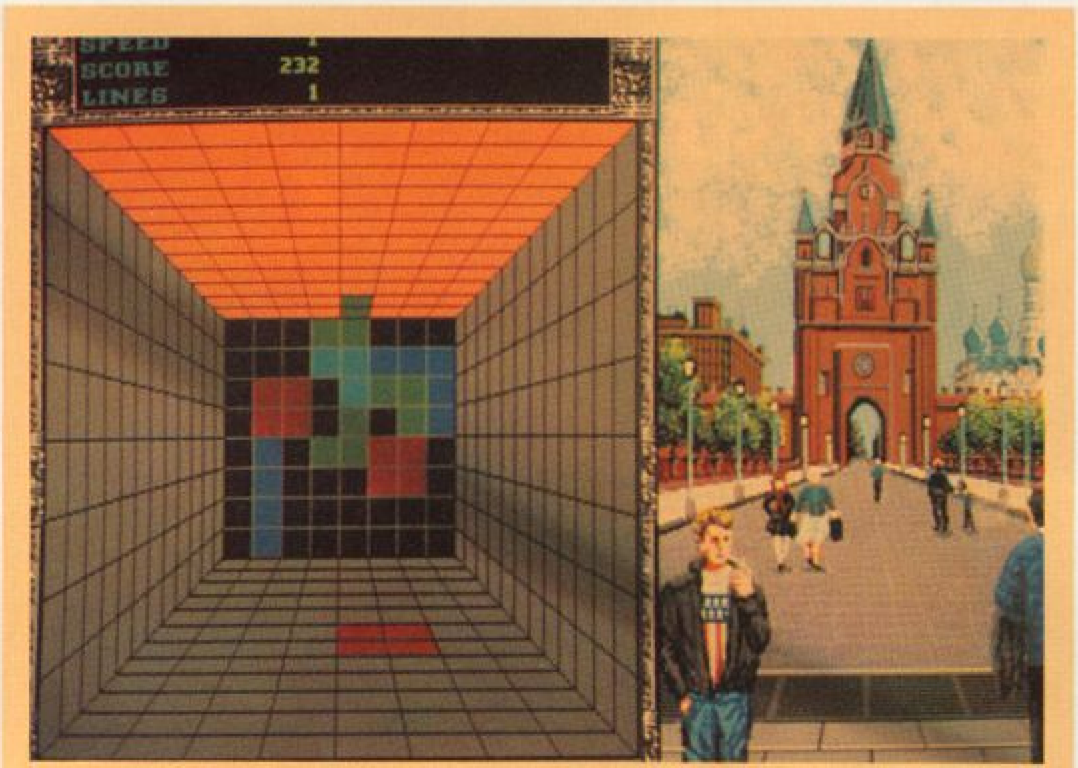
BEYOND TETRIS

OLD GROPER TAKES A CHEAP DAY RETURN TO SAN FRANCISCO AND COMES BACK WITH A HANDFUL OF GOODIES.



It's a bit difficult for us, here in the UK, to understand what a phenomena *Tetris* has become in the rest of the world. The game that was first published here was successful here, sure, but despite receiving astonishing critical acclaim, didn't seem to get to the punters in quite the same way. But it sure as hell did everywhere else.

Sitting on the tube in Chicago I tell a guy I'm into computer games - he asks me if I've ever played this great game all the people are playing in his office. It's called *Tetris*.

Walking into a store, there's the Nintendo Gameboy on sale - being swooped upon by eager consumers. It's got Tetris bundled with it.

At the recent arcade show, I'm told that the arcade version of *Tetris* as sold about 24,000 units. At, say, $600-800 a time, that's a lot of bazooma, John.

But surely such phenomenal success has to be a one-off, the cynics say to anyone that will listen. I feel I have to tell the assembled company, I think not. The Russian guy that came up with the original has just done it again, with a game called *Welltris*.

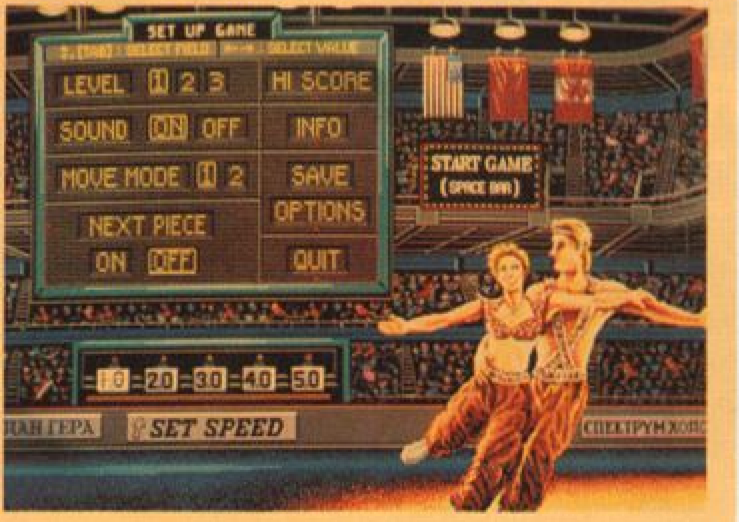
Why? 'Cause it's *Tetris*, but played as if you're looking down a well (see screenshot). Shapes can be moved around all four sides of the well as they fall down, (unless a particular face is "locked") and you can still rotate shapes along the axes of the plane of the wall.

When the shapes hit the bottom of the well, they keep moving towards the centre of the screen and the idea of the game is still to make unbroken lines across the bottom of the well, which then disappear, etc, etc.

You loose when all four sides of the well are locked - which happen when a bit of a shape cannot fall down completely into the bottom section of the well.

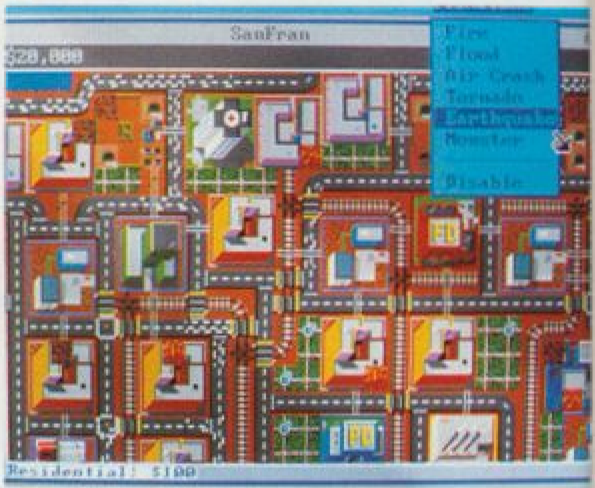
Simple enough, but is it any good. Blimey chief, so it is. Admittedly I was supremely wonderful at the original game, but I had to be dragged away from the test machine at Spectrum Holobyte, kicking and screaming for another - just one more - go.

Contemplating life separate from the fur-lined corporate straight-jacket of Maxwell Communications, there is no doubt that Welltris is going to do the future prospects of the company (still headed up by Phil "Third baseman" Adam and Gillman "I talk in Op-code" Louie) absolutely no harm whatsoever. And maybe Pasytov - the guy that keeps coming up with the ideas - might just get a Peristroka bonus in the wage packet next month. But I wonder who'll be picking up the European rights, so you and me can start playing over here?



PCS FOR PLEASURE

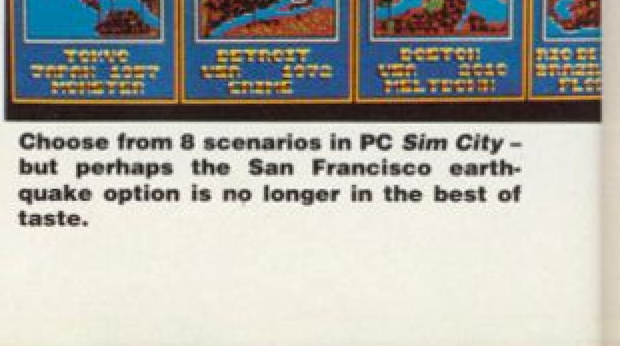
In case you didn't know it, the IBM PC is probably the best domestic computer for playing games. Ah, before the knives start coming out, maybe I should qualify that - a VGA 386 system is the best domestic computer for playing computer games. Fast as you like, 256 colours, give me a 24 Meg 386 every day of the week, particularly with a Roland sound board plugged in the back. Give me the £3500 to buy the mother with as well please.



With cities like this to simulate, why doesn't everyone own 386 PC's?

But there's no doubt that the PC is now, at last, being taken seriously on both sides of the Atlantic as a game machine. In the USA, of course, it accounts for over half of the non-Nintendo entertainment software sales, whereas the ST hardly gets a look in, with the Amiga coming well down the scale. However, it looks as if PC gamesters are coming out of the closet in the UK too - with some jolly good stuff to look forward to as well.

First and foremost, the latest craze in the States - *Sim City*. Already given rave, rave reviews in the European press, almost before



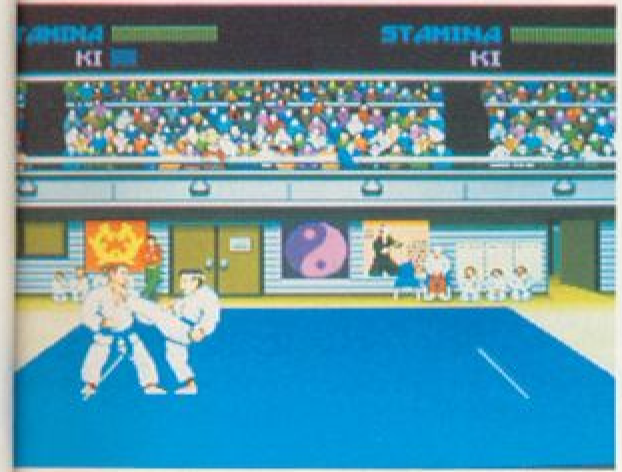
Choose from 8 scenarios in PC *Sim City* – but perhaps the San Francisco earthquake option is no longer in the best of taste.

Inforgramme (the European licensees) had heard about it itself, *Sim City* is very much a phenomena over there, with national coverage - making Maxis Software's Jeff Braun a very happy man indeed.

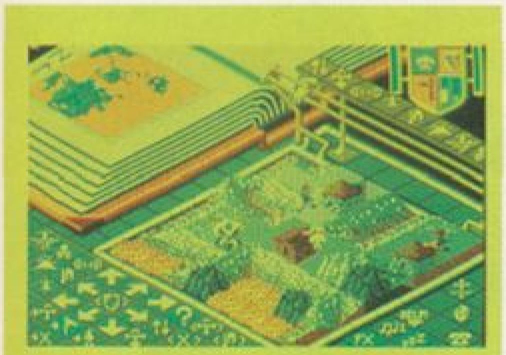
Like *Tetris* before it, *Sim City* was turned down by many a software house, with author Will Wright leaving his job at Broderbund to finish the game, before he found it a home at Maxis. Now it's received the ultimate expression of wonderfulness - with the Nintendo Corp buying the rights to publish it on the Nintendo themselves. Details of the amount of dosh changing hands on the deal are, of course, confidential - but I bet it's more than you or me could usefully eat in a month. And to think it was once turned down because of being - in the opinion of one suit - "un-Nintendoable". Funny old world, isn't it?

Another PC must is going to be PC *Dungeon Master* - in the final stages of testing now. Looking exactly like, if not better than, the originals, FTL can expect to be highly praised for the program by a whole new community of users. They'll probably make it on News at Ten, too - for causing more damage to the data and productivity of PC users than the "Friday the 13th" virus.

After all these share price scares, the average PC owning yuppie will be wanting to get rid of some of that pent-up aggression, and EA's Budokan will probably satisfy. A martial arts bask with a bit more authenticity than usual, you can have a go at Karate, Kendo, Bo or Nunchuku, then gut beaten up by guys that have trained in other disciplines, like Ninjitsu.



Just a quick glimpse of *Budokan* on PC VGA - coming soon from Electronic Arts.



PC owners can now get all religious, mystical and altogether other-worldly - no we're not talking about going the way of the Maharishi, but putting *Populous* up on the company PC. Just as completely wonderful on this format as on any other, the only question mark is over whether the lack of mouse changes the gameplay.

LEVEL 9 GET HUGE

The adventure stalwarts at Level 9 caused something of a minor stir at the recent PC Show - by announcing that Scapeghost, the latest release from that company, was going to be their last. Their last adventure, that is. No, from now on, Level 9 will be producing games under a new game authoring system, called H.U.G.E. Cringe warning - it stands for wHoly Universal Games Engine. Oooerrr.

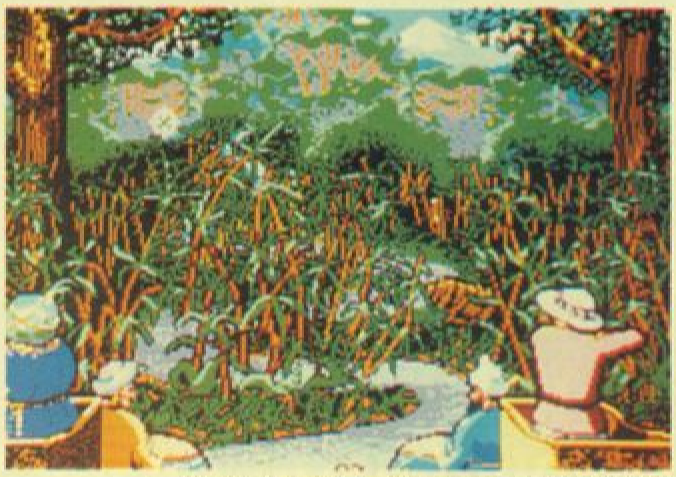
Tracking the Austins down to their new Southampton hideout proved worthwhile, as they revealed some of the power of the system that's taken anything from 7 to 10 person years of programming to produce - depending on which of them you speak to and how much they've had to drink at the time. But I'll tell you this, it's impressive.

The Austins have turned the problem of writing for multiple formats on it's head. Instead of writing separately for each machine, they've developed a language for writing games, any games, in a high level format, with separate compilers for each machine type.

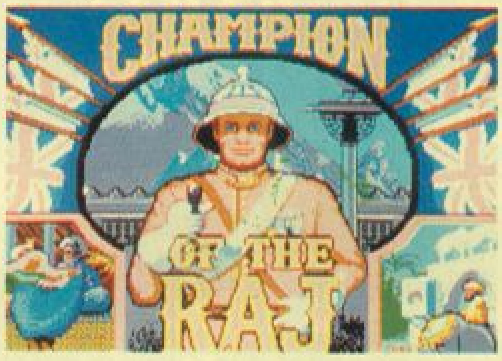
This means they can do neat party tricks, like making a change to an animation sequence on the ST - taking the changed data and compiling this straight away and running it on, say, an IBM or Amiga - with the alteration working on the other machines instantly. This is the developers' equivalent of the Philosophers' Stone.

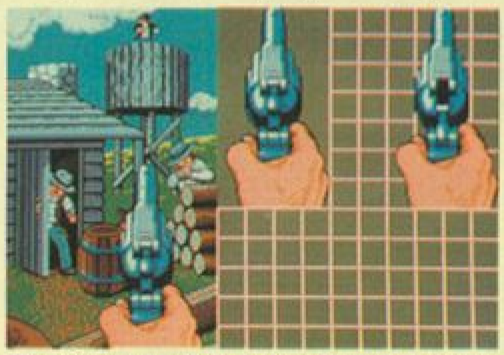
To make things even more interesting, the system seems to out perform most of the usual ways of programming games to boot, in terms of the amount and speed of animation - and if extra, super speed is needed, code segments can be nested into the framework without problems, they say.

With plans for original games (see screen shots), conversions and tie-ins on the cards, it's not surprising that big firms like Cinemaware are taking a strong interest in H.U.G.E. and Level 9. Watch that, presumably HUGE, space.

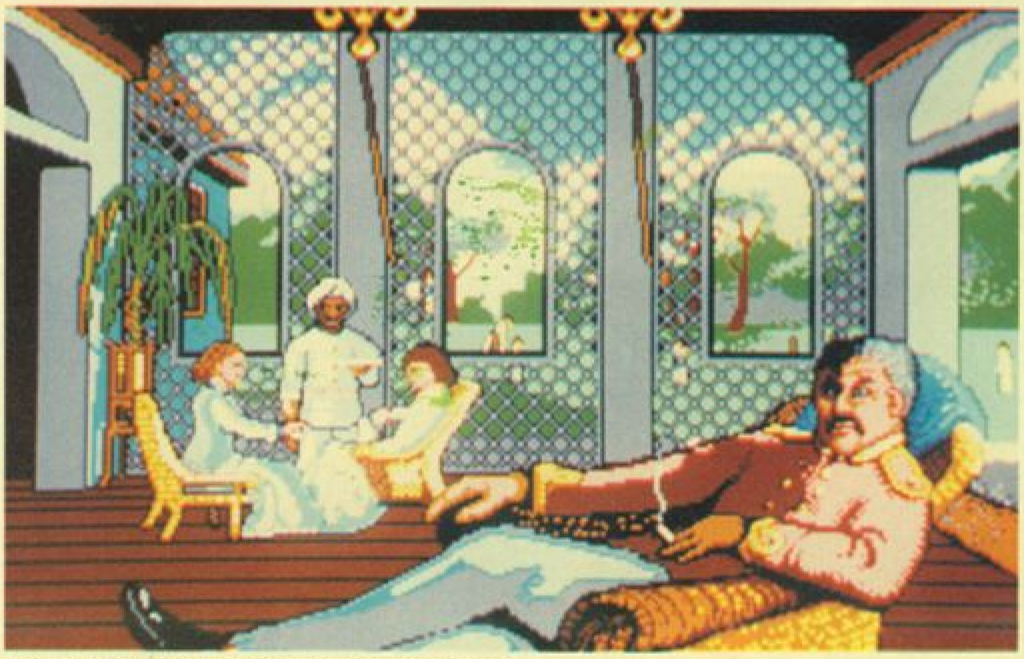


Level 9 - abandoning adventures but still typical English eccentrics...





The graphics in the HUGE games are a lot better than L9's previous efforts.



Ah, the life of a British Gentleman abroad...

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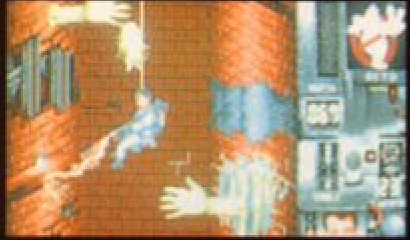

ATARI ST SCREEN SHOWN

GHOSTBUSTERS II™

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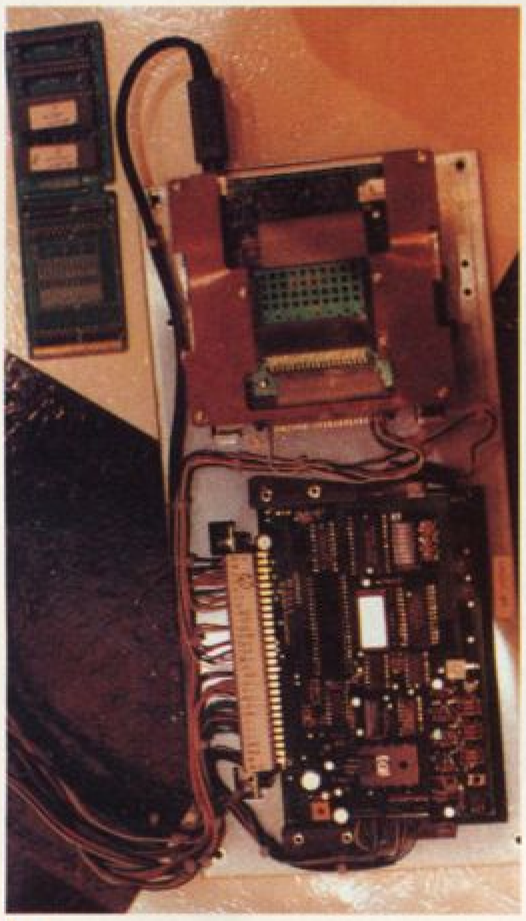
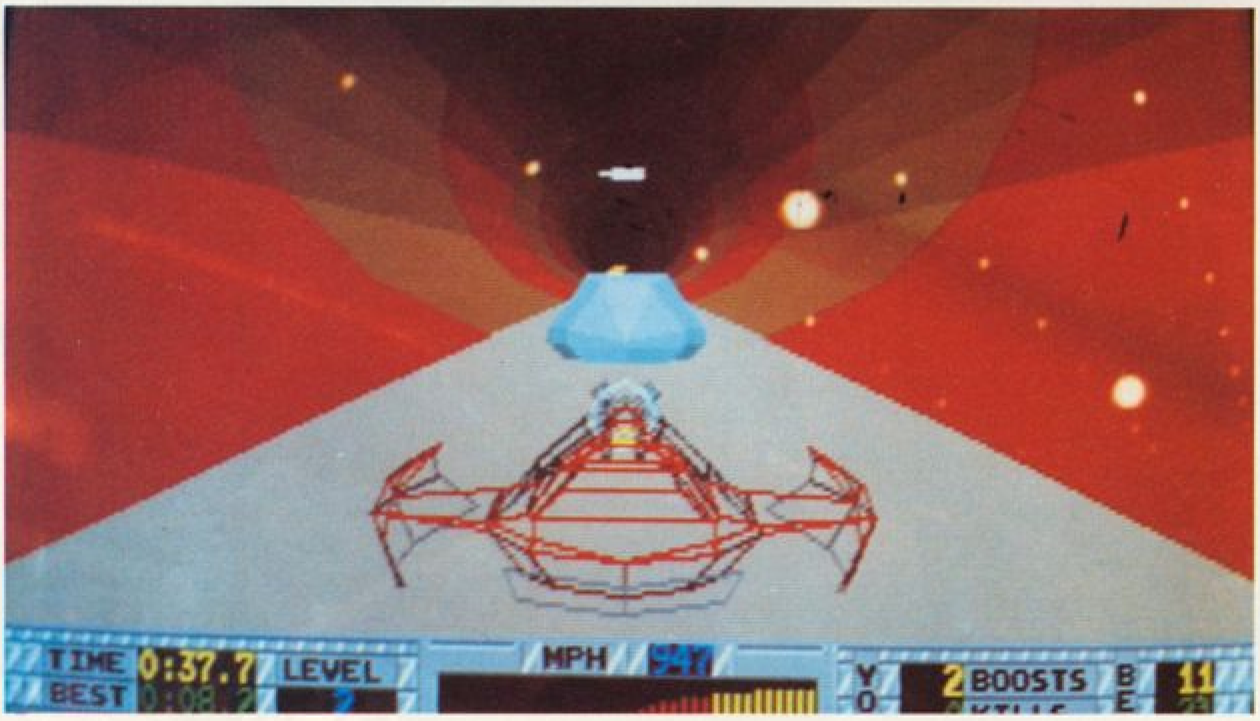
COIN-OP ENGINE

JOHN COOK DISCOVERS A PC ENGINE IN THE ARCADES

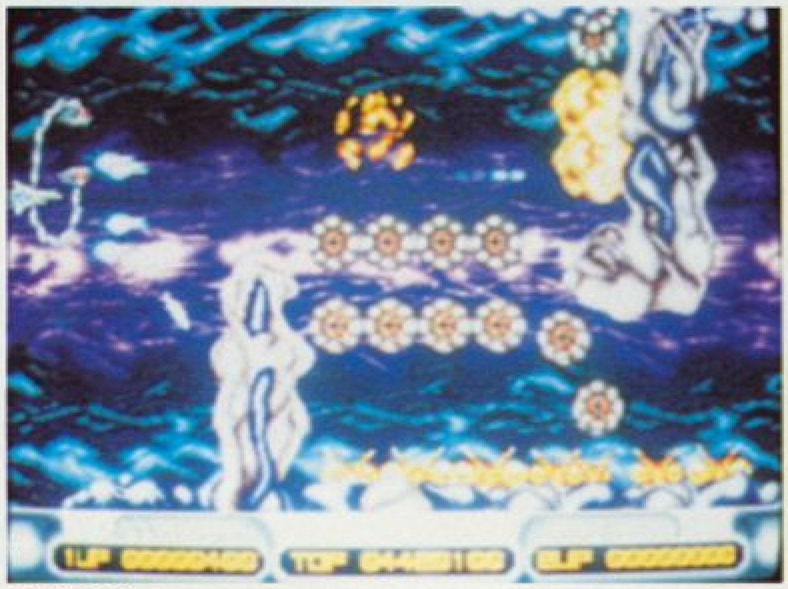
In a move that mildly gobsmacked a mildly depressed trade attending the recent AMOA Show in Las Vegas, a US firm, United Amusements, announced a shock tie-up with NEC, the makers of the PC Engine games console.



▲ **PC Engine PCB**



▼ **S.T.U.N. Runner**



X-Multiply

Renamed the Turbo Grafx-16 Stateside (trebles all round in the NEC marketing Dept for that one), it will now turn up where we all expected it least, in the arcades!

Why unexpected? Well simply, the US arcade operators view the advance of the domestic game consoles with the same relish the Polish cavalry viewed the average Blitzkrieg. Standing firm, but keeping the dry cleaners in brisk business, the operators are blaming their lowered incomes of the mega success of the Nintendo system (over 20 million units in the US now) – and the thought of a higher specced system coming through is not making them happy. Or wasn't until now.

What United have done is make a version of the PC Engine on a PCB that is compatible with JAMMA cabinets. The difference is that to change the game running on the system, what you do it just change the special ROM cartridge with the game data on it (and no, it's not directly compatible with the home console!) and there you have it – a new game.

And the price? After you've invested in the kit, a new game will cost the operator anything from $50 to $200. Compare that to $800 for a new PCB.

Cheap – and that is what the operators are getting so excited about. NEC are pretty hoopy about it as well. The system blows the Nintendo Playchoice 10 system out of the water – which won't do them any harm in the uphill struggle to defeat the Big N in the home market – and also gives NEC a great showcase for displaying new PC Engine software. They intend placing enhanced versions of the new games on the arcade version (enhanced because you can have up to 4 Meg of data on the arcade cards) – with adverts saying, "coming to your PC Engine soon!!!"

Having playtested a few games on show in Las Vegas, I can personally vouch that *Gunhead* played on a 26" monitor with an industrial strength joystick is even more fun than playing it on the home unit.

The trade loves it, the public will love it – expect to see a lot of this in the near future.

THIS MONTH'S GAMES – LIVE FROM LAS VEGAS

1989 AMOA – the big show of the year for the arcade industry – was this year slightly of colourf, as it has been repositioned two weeks before the main Japanese trade show....so naturally many of the Japanese firms were holding a little bit back for then.

But with an estimated $3.1 Billion slipping into the American video coin-slots plus another $2.37 Billion being spent by pinball junkies, the show was still well attended and very much a global event.

Sega had its new communication unit that goes between *Super Monaco Grand Prix* units. Yes funsters, multi-player *SMGP*. We must have done something very good in a past life to deserve this treat – it's now simply the best multi-player driving game in the galaxy. Hopefully we'll see that making its way over here very, very soon.

As well as showing a new PCB game *ESWAT*, Sega also had a great new golf game for its System 24 cabinet – *Super Masters*. Another best for Sega – another winner.

Atari Games lead with a new filled poly game – *S.T.U.N. Runner*. Heavy on the fab 3D, light on the gameplay – or so the first impression seemed. Namco had another link-up game based on racing quad

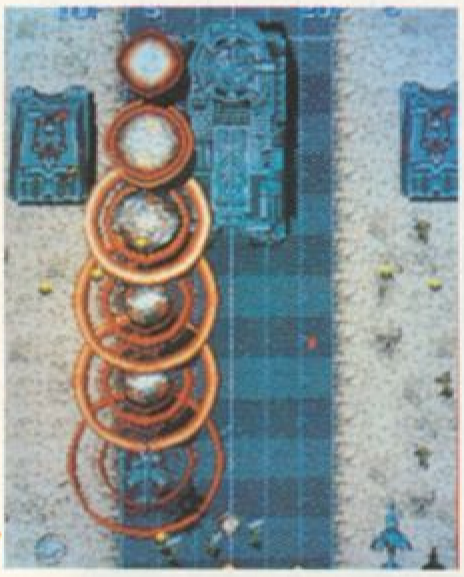
Task Force Harrier

bikes which was fun, but not up to the standard of *Final Lap*. Expect another poly game from them soon, however.

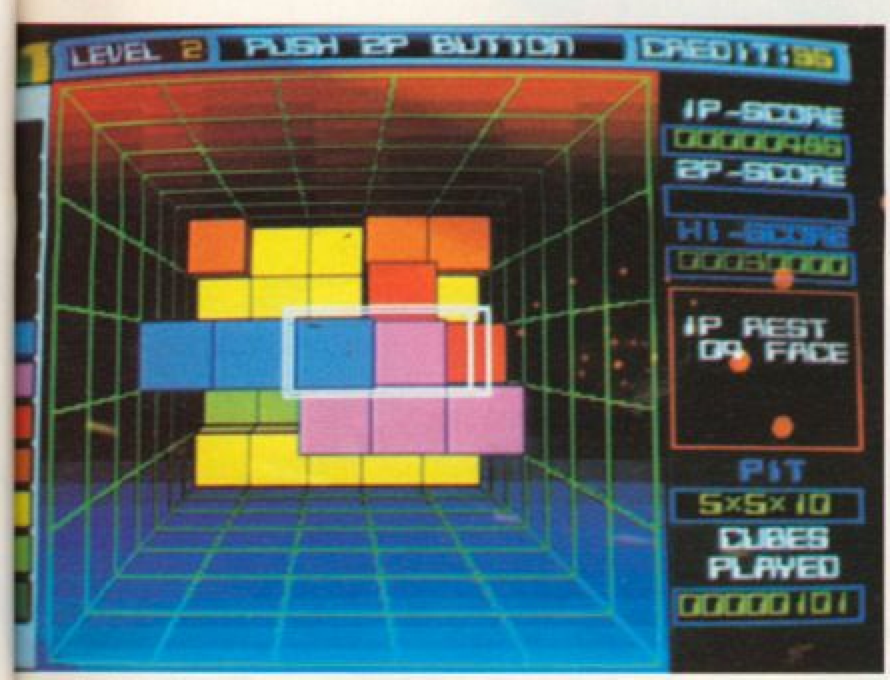
Disappointment of the show – Capcom wasting the genius of its new hardware on garbage concepts like *UN Squadron*. Huge sprites, loadsa colours, hardly worth going beyond the attract screen as the banality of this horizontal scroller unfolds. Surely better is on the way?

Racing games are in – and Jaleco has invested a lot of money in *Big Run*, a rally game based on the Paris to Dakar rally. Fun, if a little uninspired.

Data East might have a winner on its hands with *Midnight Resistance*. A good jumpy-jumpy come shooter, it's doing very well on test in the UK and well worth a try.



Task Force Harrier



Block Out

Best Pinball of the show has to be Data East's *ABC Monday Night Football*. Licensing the American Football equivalent of Match of the Day – the table is a dream to play and breaks a spell of mediocre releases from that section of the Data East mega-corp.

Best PCB of the Show – *Task Force Harrier* – another one for the autofire head bangers from the makers of *Omega Force*. Or was it *X-Multipy* from Irem?

Lastly – most unexpected success of the show was had by American Technos with a true 3-D Tetris variant, *Block Out*. Rotating shapes in the x, y and z axes makes me wish I'd paid more attention in Crystallography. Brain hurts Mum. See you next month with news from the big UK autumn show, the Associated Leisure Preview.

SPREAD THAT JAMMA

More Coin-op jargon explained – this month we're talking about serious hardware

Look into the classified pages of any arcade trade magazine and you'll see pages and pages of new and second-hand PCB's for sale. PCB's? What the hell are they?

Well, PCB stands for Printed Circuit Board, so you might guess that we are talking about serious electronics here – and you'd be dead right.

In the home sector, games software comes on floppy disc and you load the data on the disc into the RAM of a standard hardware unit in order to play. In the arcade business you buy the computer and software hardwired onto a single circuit board that you slot into a standard Cabinet. It's this board that is referred to as the PCB. But what's a Cabinet, I hear you cry?

Simply, it"s a shell unit consisting of everything that you need to run a coin-op, apart from the PCB – the box itself, joysticks, fire buttons, monitor and loudspeaker.

The idea is that an operator will buy cabinet separately from the boards, the PCB's – and simply change that board when he/she decides a game is not bringing in enough money – the cabinet remains.

The particularly perceptive reader will realise that for boards and cabinets to be interchangeable with each other, a certain amount of standardisation will have had to take place as far as input/output protocol from board to cabinet goes – and so it has. In a surprising bit of sanity, in the early days of the industry, such a standard was agreed on by the manufacturers and it's referred to as JAMMA compatibility, named after the Japanese trade association that thought it up.

So long as your PCB is JAMMA compatible, you can plug it into any JAMMA compatible cabinet (they all are) and boogie on down straight away.

Now, ever heard of a coin-op being referred to as Dedicated? What can this mean? Are the electrons whizzing around the circuits of such a game particularly dedicated to the cause of coin-ops? The sort that wouldn't be seen charged up anywhere near a washing machine, for example. Or do you have to be a particularly hardened arcade head banger to tackle such a Dedicated game?

Nope – all it means is that the unit in question has a control system on the cabinet and/or other features on the PCB that make it non-JAMMA compatible – so you couldn't take a normal PCB and plug it into that system.

For example, take *Operation Wolf*. The control system here is a gun – not the usual joystick and two fire buttons. You wouldn't be able to plug say, *Strider*, into this one – it wouldn't work. Likewise most of the games that throw you around – driving games and so on; these are all dedicated units.

In the trade these are recognised as usually being superior games, but are viewed as high risk ventures, as they cost more (you have to effectively buy the specialised cabinet along with the PCB hardware) and you can't change over boards to make it into another game. Most arcades will have one or two dedicated at the front of the shop as showpieces to draw the punters into the place, however.

Occasionally, if a particular Dedicated has been very popular – *Gauntlet* for instance – someone will release a conversion kit for it. This, as you might expect, is a piece of hardware that replaces the original PCB, but utilises the non-standard control system of the original specialised cabinet.

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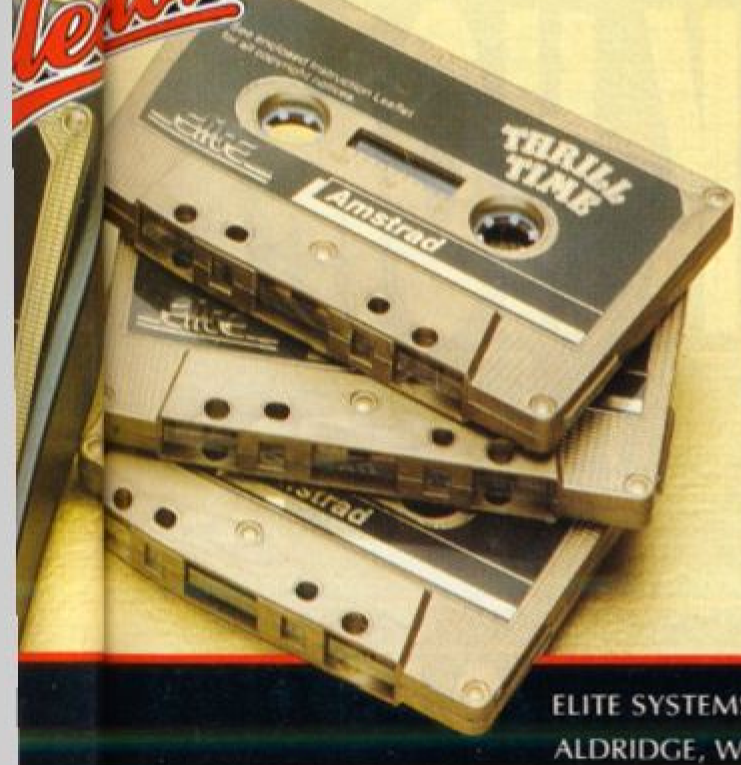

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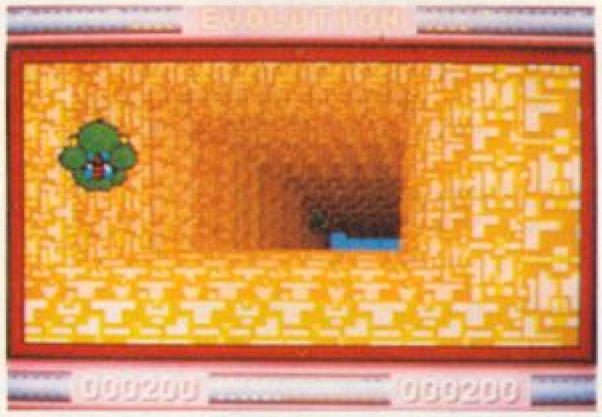
GOING TO TOWN...

Fujitsu's 32-bit FM Towns is setting Japan alight with its combination of raw processing power and CD-ROM drive. ACE brings you the specs, the software story, and a prayer that someone will bring you the machine...!



***Evolution*, a stunning 3D adventure that shows off the Town's powerful graphics processor and colour handling capabilities.**

More than half a year has passed since Fujitsu's brand new computer, the FM TOWNS, made its début in Japan. It was first unveiled at a computer show in Tokyo in January where it caused a sensation amongst trade and pubic alike. It wasn't just the 32-bit performance or the hi-res graphics and sound that got people talking either – what really raised the adrenalin levels was the built-in CD-ROM, supplied as standard with the machine.

Although Fujitsu isn't that well-known in Britain, they've in fact been very active in the Japanese home market for some time, so the FM Towns didn't come as complete surprise. The company have a reputation for bringing out interesting micros ranging from the highly regarded (in Japan) FM-7 to the more recent FM-77 AV – a very colourful little beast with high graphic and sound specifications. The FM Towns is therefore part of a continuing series of hardware releases and not just a one-off.

MEGA-DISK

The CD-ROM that comes with the machine has some obvious advantages, but there are some less obvious ones as well. To start with, you get the vast capacity of an optical disk (up to 540Mb in the case of the Towns unit). This means that very few games require more than one disk (astonishingly, there are some that do!) so despite the higher cost of individual CDR disks, software can sometimes work out cheaper. Furthermore, the disks are far more reliable and, being ROM, you cannot, of course, delete any files by mistake or write over them. Finally, the disks are almost indestructible in normal use, so you don't have to pussy foot around the bedroom any more trying to to trample on your carefully scattered diskettes. In fact, having a CD-ROM is a bit like having a vast capacity cartridge system, except its cheaper (cartridges carrying 1Mbyte are under development but currently cost hundreds of pounds).

POWER ON TAP

The Towns boasts a 32-bit 80386 CPU. This makes it as fast as the latest PC-compatible 386 machines (and a lot faster than some of them). It makes the current ST and Amiga performance look pretty sick in operation and games like *AfterBurner*, which on the Towns uses a hefty wadge of colour and sound, really show the results. The other advatnage of the 386 is that it can directly address (i.e. refer to) more memory than a 16-bit chip, though in practise most games do not load that much data into memory anyway (assuming you've got the memory installed – the FMT comes with 1Mbyte on the entry level machine, 2Mbyte on the more expensive model – see the Specs box on page 29).

However 'power' isn't all about chips and disk capacity. What really makes the Towns attractive is the way everything works together – when you get CD-ROM AND 32-bit technology hand in hand you get some stunning displays and sounds. This is particularly true of the latter as the CDR disk storage medium is really the only way to provide the memory needed for high-quality (16-bit) sound samples. You can pack *Tetris*, a stunning series of digitised backgrounds, and fully digitised stereo sound of CD-quality onto the CDR – something you simply couldn't do on a conventional system.

The graphics chip in the Towns is no weakling either. It offers very effective sprite and scroll functions – essential for making certain game categories (particularly shoot-em-ups) really impressive.

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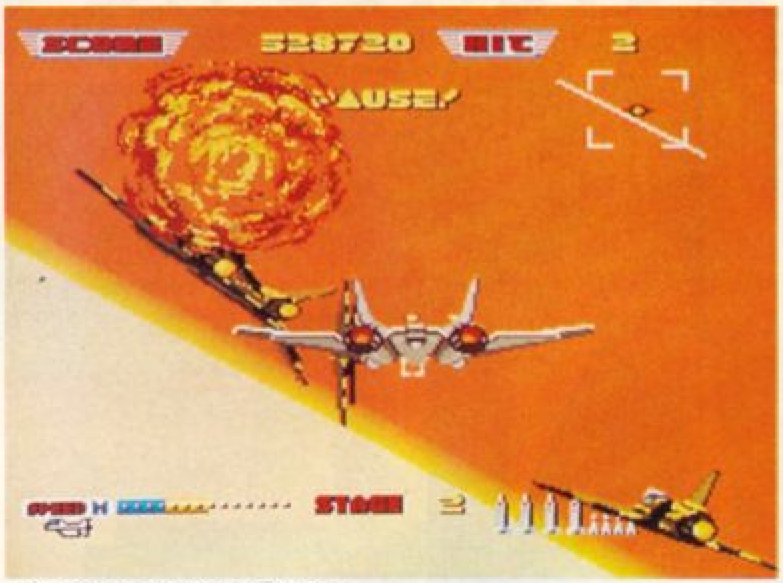
AN INSPIRING TALE...

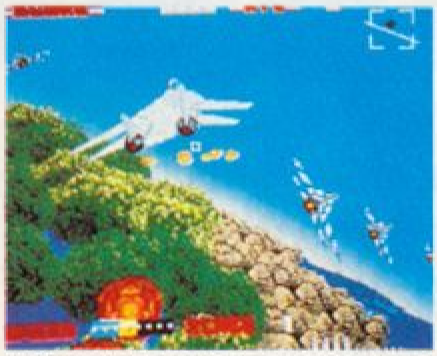
of international co-operation between ACE and Japan's Number One games magazine, LogIn, brought you this report. Here at ACE we'd like to say a big thanks to LogIn, and especially to Akihiko Yabu and Masato Niizike for all their help. We hope to bring you *more joint reports like this in future*, giving you the low-down on the exciting Japanese market. Meanwhile, all our best wishes to the LogIn team...and a large bottle of the best Scotch!



***AfterBurner* goes to Towns...**

PERIPHERALS

The Towns is very much a WIMP (Windows, Icons, Mice, Pointers) machine. In fact, the operating system designed by Fujitsu takes the machine so far in this direction that a keyboard is not standard equipment. Almost all the software, including the OS, is mouse-driven and requires nothing more than menu selection and clicking to operate. Keyboards are only necessary for word processing and other text intensive operations. The main advantage of this for gamesters is that it reduces the cost of the basic package – it also underlines the fact that Fujitsu regard the machine primarily as an entertainment micro. If only Commodore and Atari had taken this attitude from day one!



***Afterburner* again. Just look at those colours.**

There are two types of CRT monitor available from Fujitsu, one costing 89,800 yen (£399) and the other 138,000 yen (£610) depending on resolution. However, the Towns has proved so popular in Japan that there are already many third parties producing monitors, memory and other widgets to go with the machine. You will soon be able to lash out on an 80387 co-processor (great for speeding up the old 3D routines), a 1Mb expansion memory, a video card, a modem card, and a SCSI card (for communicating with other standard peripherals) to name only a few. At the moment however, most of these peripherals are still under development as the machine has not been widely available for long enough.

One slightly odd peripheral, you might think, is System Sacom's 45 Mb HD drive and 5.25 FD drive. Why, after all, should you need a hard disk or floppy when you've got that whopping great CD-ROM? Apart from storage, the main reason for games players is that the CD-ROM has one major disadvantage – it offers relatively slow access speed to data on the disc compared to HD or FD. For business users, this can be critical when working with applications that constantly access a lot of data. It's also bad news for some games that require frequent disk access.

PARLEZ VOUS KANJI?

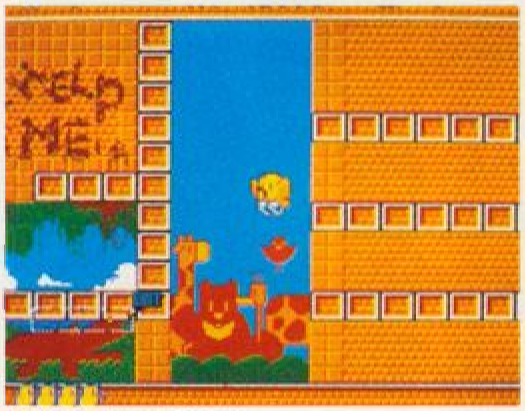
Any Japanese company has a big handicap compared with those in English-speaking countries. In Japan, a machine has, naturally enough, got to cope with the Japanese language, the most complex written system in the world with more than 5,000 characters. This naturally results in a need for larger RAM and storage devices. In this sense, the FM Towns has got an edge over its rivals, having plenty of memory and a large ROM which includes a Japanese dictionary in it. This is certainly contributing to the popularity of the machine in Japan, – the Macintosh, for example, though highly respected, was rarely purchased by Japanese until recently when the Japanese script system was implemented. It is now one of the most popular machines in the country.

Finally, the price of the Towns makes it a clear winner with the Japanese. Although expensive by UK standards at over £1500, it competes in the market with machines that would normally cost at least three times as much. After some debate, Fujitsu eventually priced it at 338,000 yen (£1500) for model-1, with one FD drive, and 398,000 yen (£1770) for model-2, with two FD drives.

THE SOFTWARE

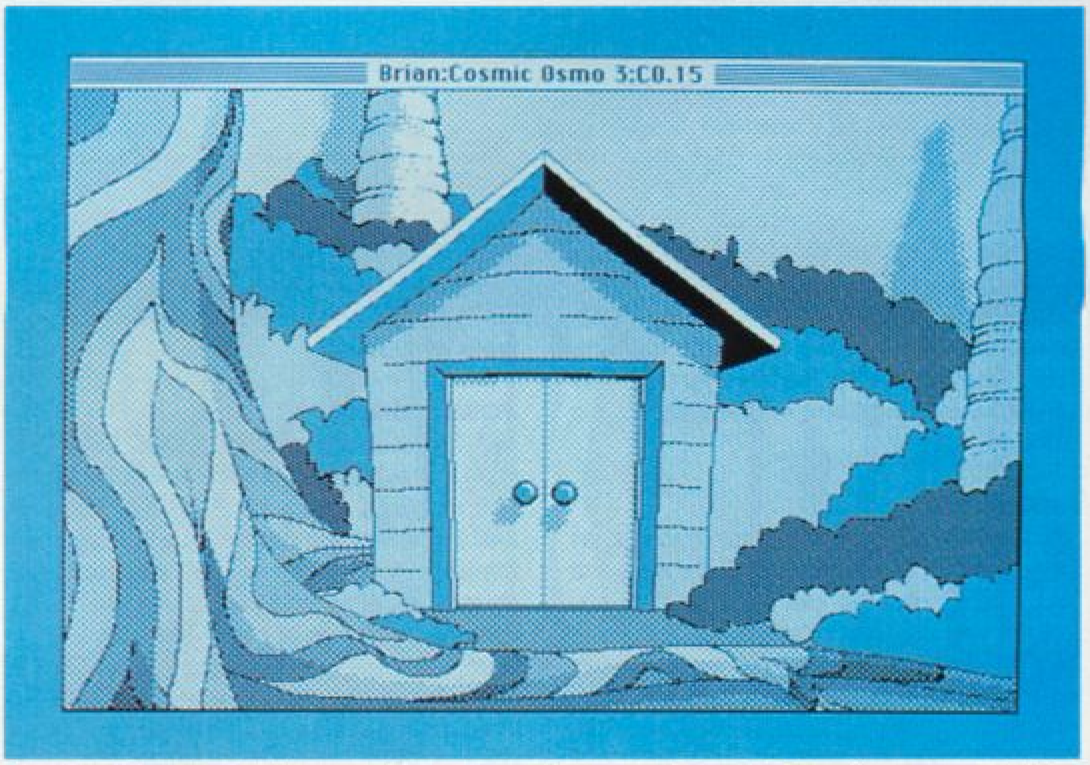
The FM TOWNS comes with a very well designed operating system. As stated above, you can do everything simply by selecting from a pull-down menu and double-clicking the command you want. You are totally free from complex commands like DIR or FILES. But what about the games...and are we going to see it over here in the UK?

Original software is currently being released both in Japan and the States for the machine while many other successful titles on other formats are being converted. In the States, the FM Towns Support Centre, fully supported by Fujitsu, was established in May and works to improve co-operation with software developers. This is particularly important since in order to develop a software under new technology, such as CD-ROM, programmers have to share their knowledge as much as possible.



NewZealand Story.

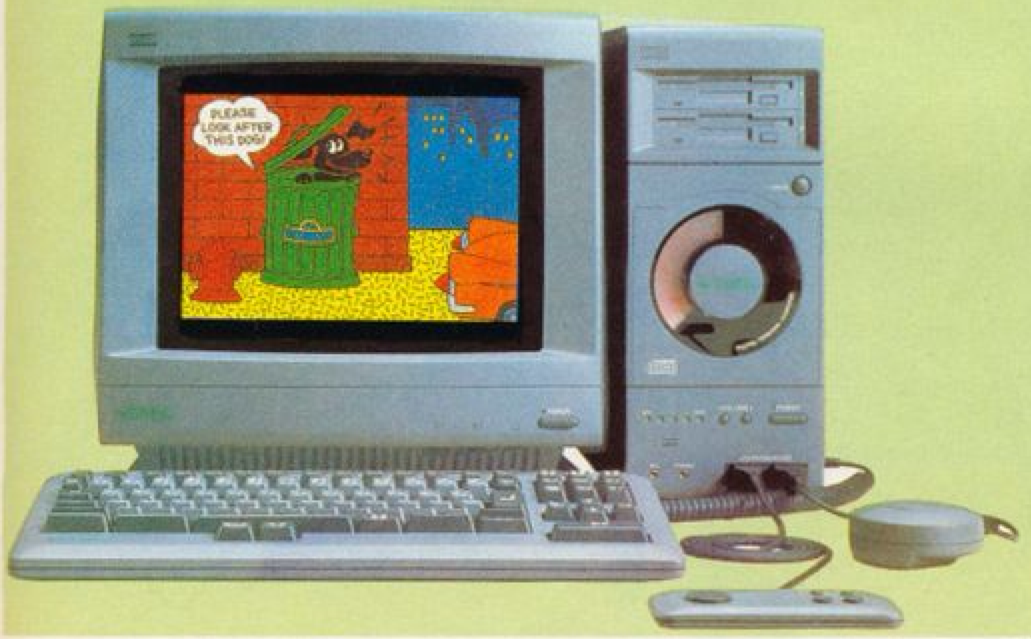
Information gathered by the Support Centre will be available via CompuServe for developers who support the Centre in return. This open access means that it is by no means impractical for British software houses to support the machine should they wish to. At the moment, however, although both Mirrorsoft and Acorn (who have a machine) appear to be interested, it is unlikely that anyone will bring out games unless we see the Towns sold over here.



Readers who checked out our Hypergames feature on *Cosmic Osmo* in a recent edition of ACE will know that this new game-style could prove very popular in future. Hypergames use a vast number of linked graphic scenes together with animation sequences to offer the player a whole visual environment to explore at will. This sort of game is an excellent candidate for CD-ROM technology, so it's significant that the the only official programming language currently available for the Towns is 'Towns Gear'. This is a HyperCard-like programming environment that could be used to create *Osmo* or *Manhole*-type games using the CD-ROM. *Manhole* is already on CD-ROM for the Mac, so a Towns version could follow soon...

FM POWER...

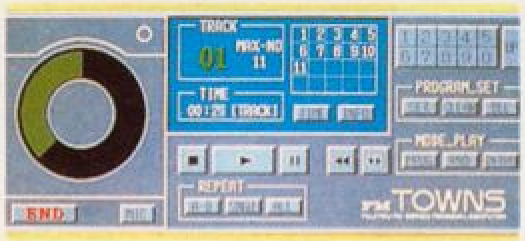
Microprocessor:	80386 (32bit)
RAM:	model-1: 1Mbytes model-2: 2Mbytes
VRAM:	512K
Sprite RAM:	128K
Internal drives:	model-1: CD-ROM (540Mbytes x 1) model-2: CD-ROM (540Mbytes x 1) FD (1.2Mbytes x 2)
Graphic mode (dots):	640 x 480: 256 out of 16,770,000 colours 640 x 480: 16 out of 4,096 colours / 2 screens 320 x 240: 32,768 colours / 2 screens 640 x 400: 16 out of 4,096 colours/ 2 screens
Sound:	PCM sounds: stereo 8-channel FM sounds: stereo 6-channel sampling: 8 bit, 19.2 Hz CD-ROM works as an ordinary CD player
Size:	328mm x 150mm x 400mm
Weight:	11 kg
Optional devices:	Key board 80387 processor expansion memory video card modem card SCSI card 14" display



The only good news here is that a successful American launch (which seems likely because of Fujitsu's commitment) means we should be able to see slightly cheaper grey imports and then, if the machine really catches on, an authorised version. The situation is slightly improved since the technology used in the Towns is, at the moment, pretty future-proof so it's not a case of 'If it's not out this year, it'll be too late..' Unfortunately, Fujitsu are adamant at present that the machine is for the domestic Japanese market only, but grey imports should be available as soon as production steps up.

Meanwhile, converted games include *After Burner*, *New Zealand Story* and several other popular conversions. If you want a whopper, you could try 'Last Armageddon' which comprises no less than 3 CD-ROMs. Each disc is as much as 540 Mb so that makes 1.5 Gb altogether in an RPG *Ultima*-style romp.

At the moment, the FM Towns seems to be almost entirely game oriented. 90% of software is games only, 10% comprises paint/draw/music/communication tools. Though there are no business applications available, Fujitsu should soon change all that with an MS-DOS emulator that currently enables more than 30 business applications to run on the FM TOWNS. It includes the most popular Japanese word processor 'Ichitaro' and as well as more familiar programs like Lotus 1-2-3.



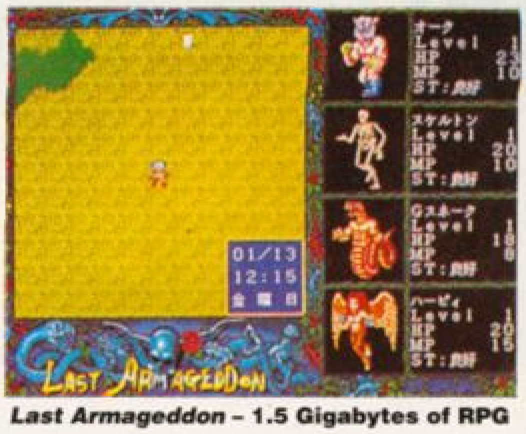
One of the advantages of the CD-ROM format is that it is identical with CD-Audio. This means you're FM Towns can not only play back conventional CD disks, but it can also, with appropriate software, use them as as sample sources for editing and manipulation.

Fujitsu have already shipped around 20,000 units of the machine in Japan – a tiny number compared to the millions of MSX and Nintendo machines, but it's growing very rapidly. The main problem has been the speed of manufacture, rather than lack of demand, with most available models going into shops for demonstration. The company hope to be able to fulfill demand soon and we can then expect the software base to explode.

However, one problem at the moment does seem to be the marketing policy behind the machine. Fujitsu are claiming that the FM Towns will be a computer for everybody ranging from kids through housewives to business users. Compare this with the approach taken in Japan by Sharp a few years ago with their X68000 – clearly marketed as an Apple II-alike and now very strongly supported.

Meanwhile, competition is shaping up with NEC announcing their own CD-ROM machine, the PC-8801 MC, an 8-bit personal computer with a CD-ROM drive as a standard equipment. The machine uses a PC-Engine CD-ROM unit and costs about two-thirds of the Towns machine, though the spec isn't as good.

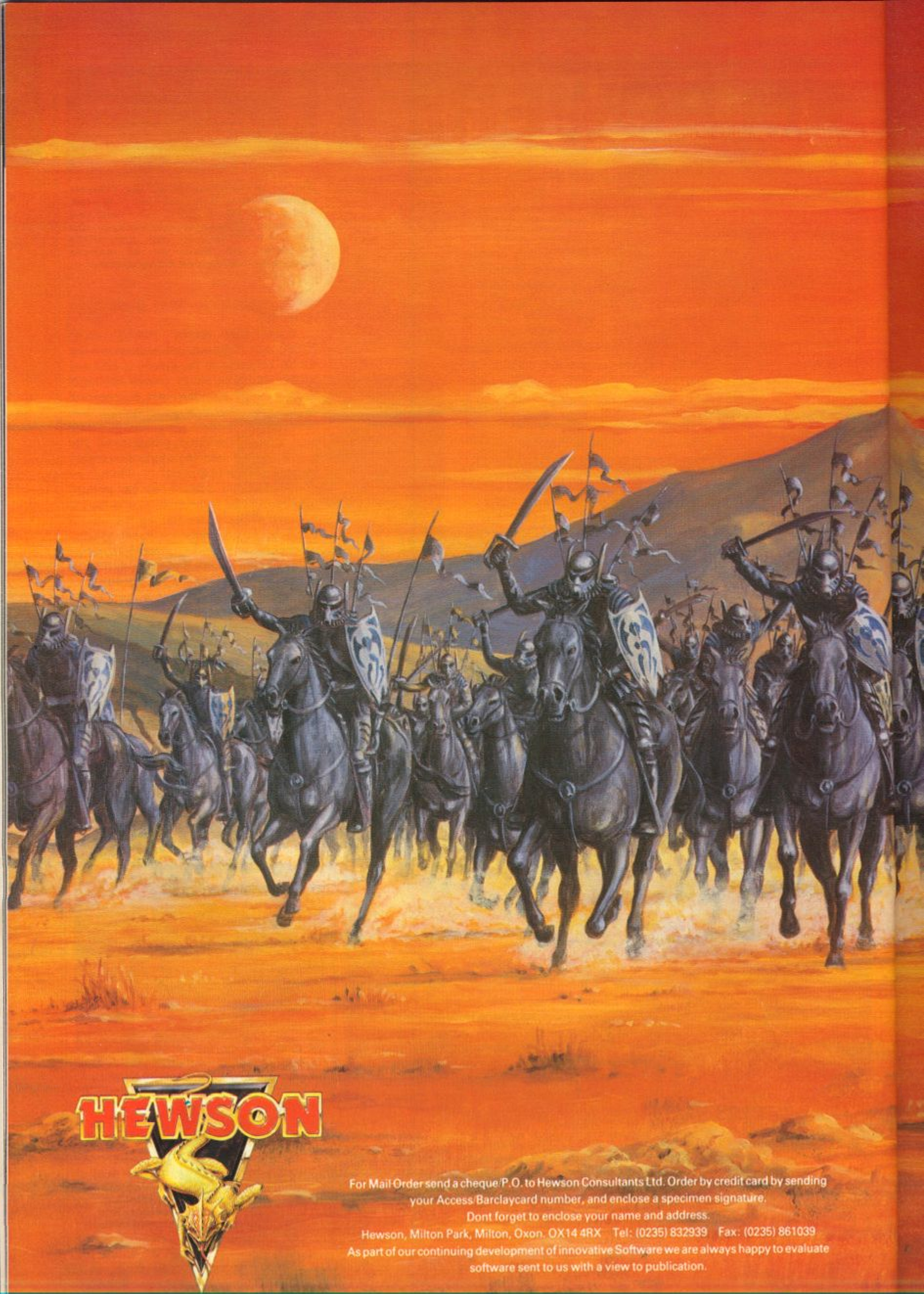
There's no doubt that CD-ROM is the storage medium of the future. Let's hope the British market catches up soon with machines like the Towns, otherwise we may get left far behind in the race towards truly advanced computer entertainment.



Last Armageddon **– 1.5 Gigabytes of RPG**

MUSIC PRO-TOWNS

Music PRO TOWNS **from Musical Play – composing, editing, and sampling software.**



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You are one such Fanatic, a magical warrior in search of Victory in the battle scarred land of Gargore.

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THE MISSION IS VITAL – THE ODDS ARE AGAINST YOU.

F15 Strike Eagle II

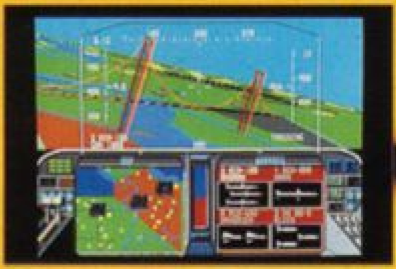
F15 Strike Eagle II is a whole new concept in computer air warfare. Dogfighting is the name of the game. The air swarms with enemy aircraft. Dice with death as you light your 'burners' and head for the skies. Success depends on making the right moves – fast. Super smooth, non-stop action takes place over 250,000 square miles of authentic terrain. Superb, solid-filled polygon based 3D graphics makes it feel as though you really are in the thick of the action. Hundreds of options, four difficulty levels and a vast amount of missions and scenarios make F15 Strike Eagle II perfect for dogfighting veterans and novices alike.

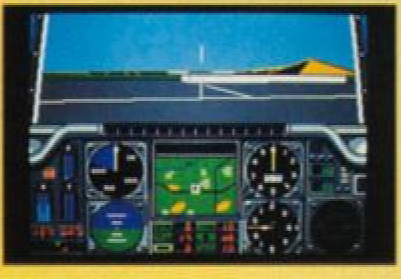
F-15
STRIKE EAGLE
II
MICROPROSE

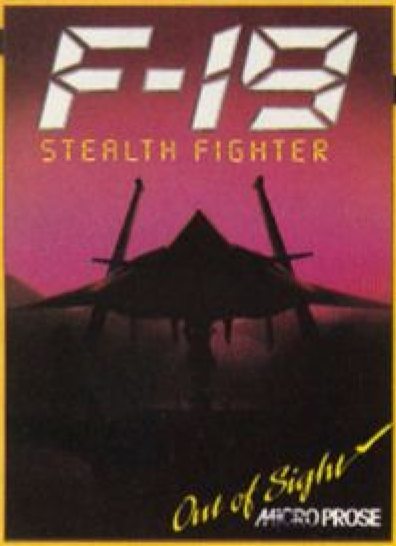
F-19 Stealth Fighter

MicroProse's F-19 Stealth Fighter transports you into the real world of Stealth Technology. Placed in charge of one of the USAFs most valuable and secret aircraft, you must carry out missions deemed too dangerous for normal aircraft to accomplish. Amazing three-dimensional graphics add a totally new dimension to F-19 Stealth Fighter as you fly, undetected, at 75 feet around Berlin and strike deep within Communist territory.

F-19 is not just a flight simulation – it's an experience!







Gunship

Gunship has proved itself to be one of the truly great combat flight simulations. Based on the AH-64 Apache, one of the most advanced attack helicopters in the world and developed with the help of real attack helicopter pilots, Gunship lets you loose on a high-performance helicopter that can fly low and slow, hover, sideslip, fly backwards, rotate and go into a full-blooded, 200 knot power dive through some of the hottest combat zones in the world.

In the face of adversity, it is a brave heart and sharp mind that matters more than the technology behind the man.

The spirit of attack is all . . .

MICROPROSE
SIMULATION • SOFTWARE

MicroProse, Unit 1, Hampton Road Industrial Estate, Tetbury, Glos, GL8 8DA.

stein

STRATEGY SIMULATIONS

FACE THE ULTIMATE CHALLENGE

Save The World From Soviet Domination
THE NUCLEAR ATTACK SUBMARINE SIMULATION
Red Storm Rising
MICRO PROSE
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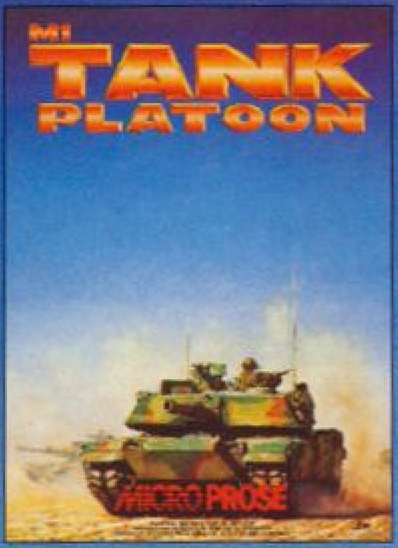
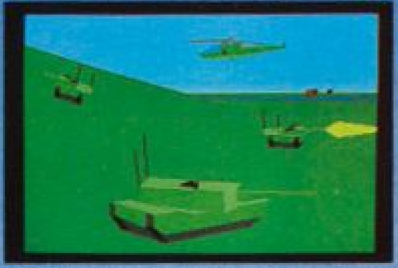
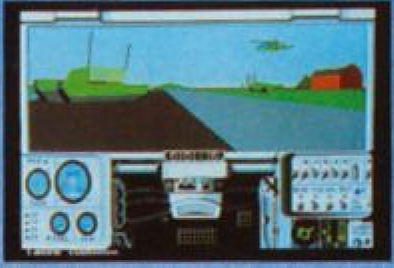


M1 Tank Platoon is the definitive simulation of armoured land combat. US tank platoons have four M1s. Four soldiers operate each tank. That's four tanks, sixteen men. And you control the whole shooting match. 16,000 acres of rolling, superb 3D terrain allows you to hide your tanks behind hills and ridges, just as a real tank commander would. Give orders to your entire platoon or to individual tanks. Lay down some heavy artillery or mortar fire before advancing your main tanks, or possibly call in air support in the form of A10 Tankbusters or AH64 Gunships. Defend yourself against attack from the air by strategically positioning anti-aircraft batteries. The strategic permutations are endless!

With thousands of battlefields and millions of situations, there is infinite variation within the game. With varied skill levels allowing veteran tank commanders, take on single battles or wage war from start to finish.

M1 Tank Platoon. All the action of armoured land combat. Available for IBM PC and Compatibles £39.95.



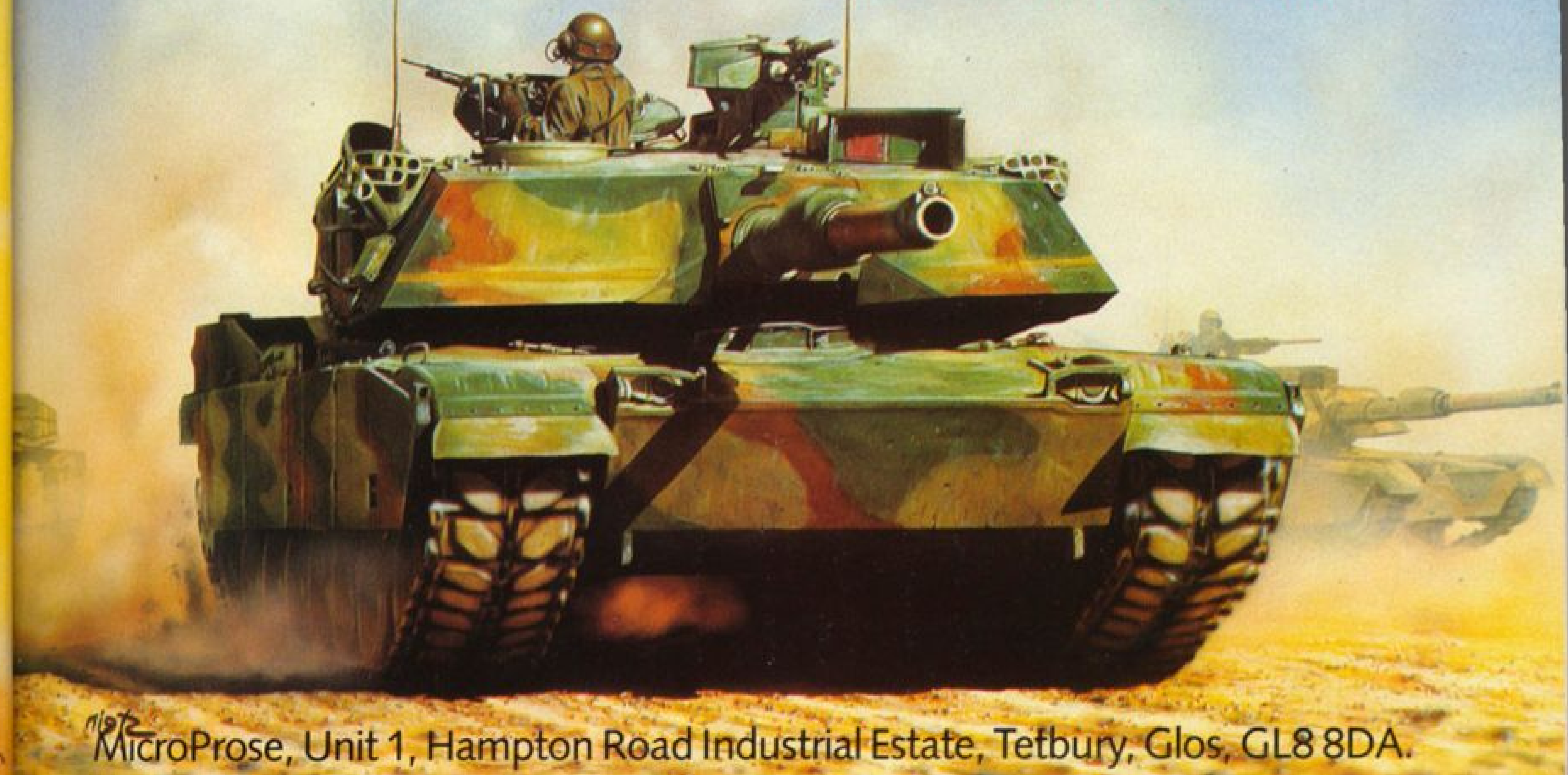


RED STORM RISING

This high technology simulator of strategy & tactics is based on the International best seller by Tom Clancy.

Working with the authors, MicroProse have brought the book's intense action and excitement to your computer screen. You are put in command of an American nuclear attack submarine at a time when 2 super powers collide. Available for C64 £14.95 cassette, £19.95 disk, Atari ST £24.95, IBM PC Compatibles £24.95 . . . "AWESOME" (CCI)

MICRO PROSE
SIMULATION • SOFTWARE



MicroProse, Unit 1, Hampton Road Industrial Estate, Tetbury, Glos, GL8 8DA.

WHAT'S THE SCORE?

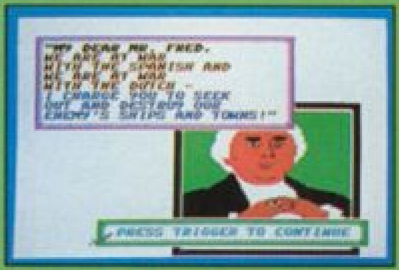
MicroProse's action games feature a depth of realism, excitement and strategy rarely seen before in computer entertainment.

TWO SCORE GOLD PIECES

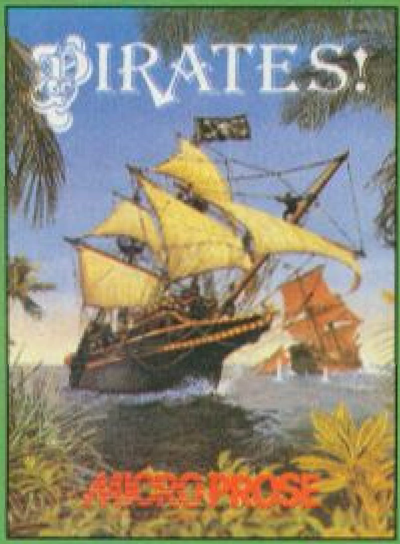
Pirates, played by over a quarter of a million square miles, offers unparalled gameplay and adventure on the high seas;

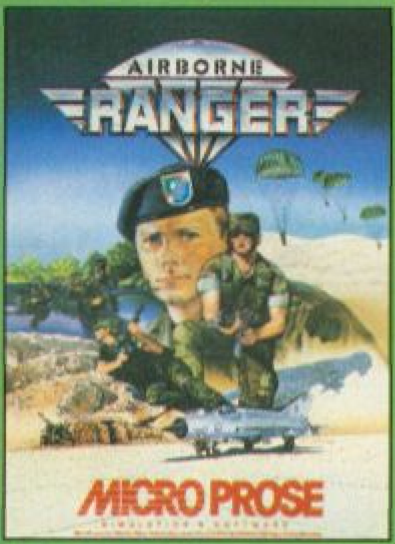
SCORE TO SETTLE

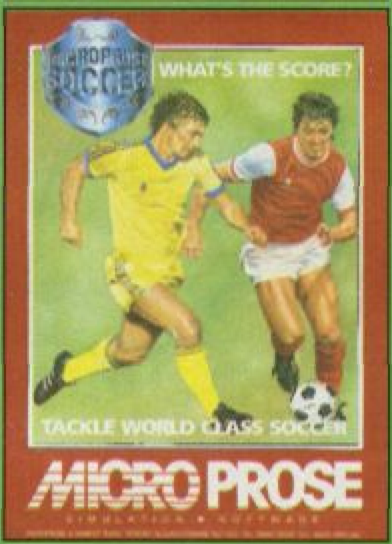
Airborne Ranger's fast-paced action challenges your skills and reflexes over a dozen missions deep behind enemy lines.

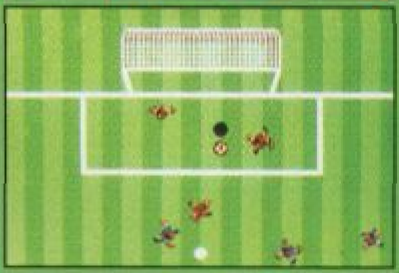

PRESS TRIGGER TO CONTINUE

CLEAR
STANDARD
DONE
Hand Grenade
Time Bomb


PIRATES!
MICROPROSE

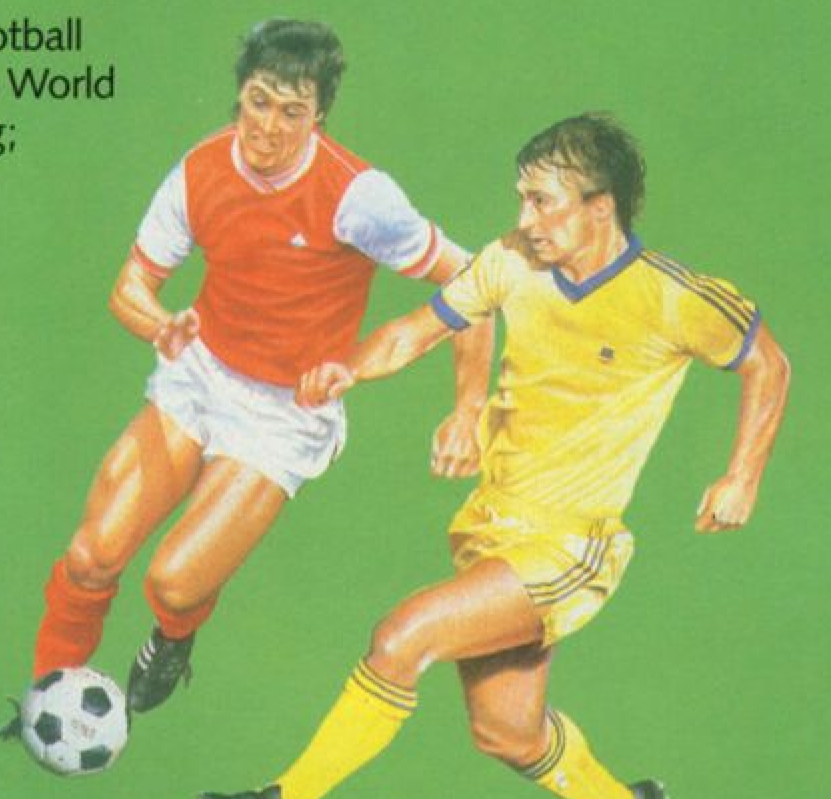

AIRBORNE
RANGER
MICRO PROSE


SOCCER
WHAT'S THE SCORE?
TACKLE WORLD CLASS SOCCER
MICRO PROSE
SIMULATION • SOFTWARE



WHAT'S THE SCORE?

Soccer was the world's first true football simulation – from indoor league to World Cup Final, it's just like the real thing;



MICRO PROSE
SIMULATION • SOFTWARE

MicroProse, Unit 1, Hampton Road Industrial Estate, Tetbury, Glos, GL8 8DA.

NIGHTMARE ON SOFT ST.

John Minson looks into the past, present and future of horror software...

Fear. Your pulse races. Adrenalin rushes to your brain. Your breathing quickens and the hairs on the back of your neck stand up. The faces of fear. Boris Karloff as Frankenstein's tortured creation. The gruesomely gut-tearing tales of James Herbert. Clive Barker's creatures of the the other world, another morality. The sardonic slice-and-dice wit of Freddy Krueger.

Fear in every form, in every medium. The ghost tale told by children. The Gothic novel's musty pages. The cinematic shocker that sends audiences screaming behind their seats. But computer games...

The first micro monsters were monstrosities in their own right. When Palace exhumed *The Evil Dead* for its first ever release in 1984 it turned the cult film into a bland birds eye view of tiny sprites running around schematic rooms.

"Back in 1983 *Evil Dead* was one of the biggest films in Britain," Palace's Pete Stone recalls, "and I thought it would make a good game scenario. You had the hero trying to survive the nasties. But we never set out to make a horror game to scare people." Which is as well considering the only screams came from disappointed purchasers expecting a computer nasty.

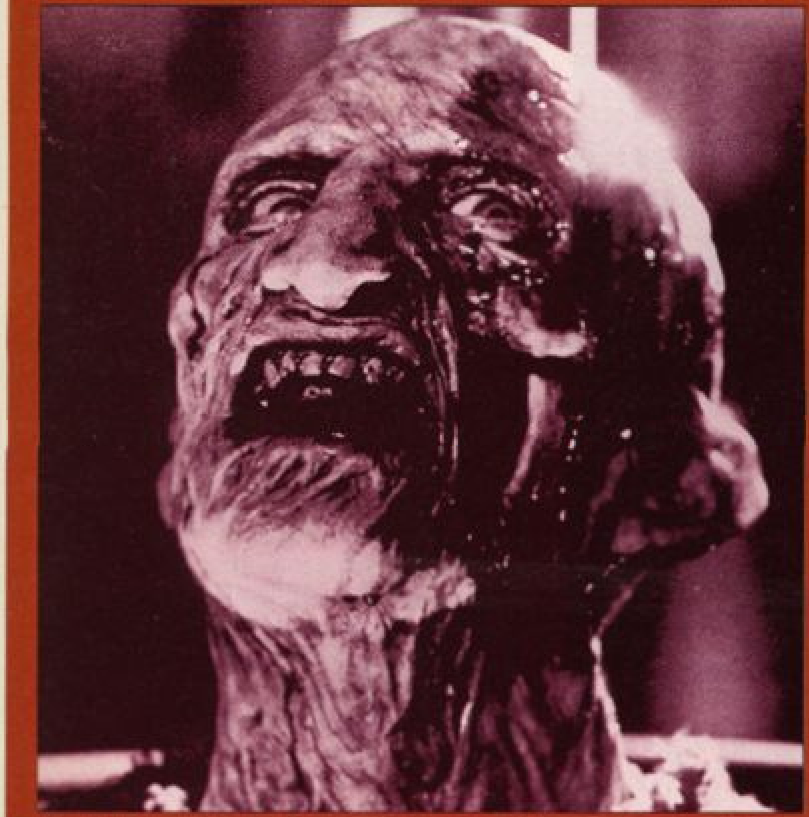
About the same time unwitting gamers experienced an unlucky *Friday 13th* courtesy of Domark. This actually caused a minor uproar over the bloody hockey mask on its box. Unfortunately the horror stopped there. Loading the program unleashed a series of stick figures who just wandered around waiting to be killed.

"Don't mention that..." Domark's Dominic Wheatley groans. "At the vague concept level we hoped it was a piece that could make people spooked. I believe that can be done but [*Friday 13th*] didn't do it because we placed it in the hands of people who were creatively incompetent."

So horror software got off to a grisly start and has generally remained as frightening as *Carry On Screaming* ever since. Software houses just don't seem to grasp what makes us gasp. The easiest (some might say laziest)

MONSTROUS PERSONALITY

FREDDY KRUEGER ON HORROR SOFTWARE...



Freddy Krueger is the first movie monster with mass appeal since the fifties and actor Robert Englund, who plays the child killer in the *Nightmare on Elm Street* series, believes he knows why.

"It's a monster with a personality... a diabolical sense of humour. It's not so much that I'm terribly funny but I relieve the tension. When you relieve the tension it's so much easier to set the audience up and scare them again."

Englund's analysis presents a considerable challenge to software scare-mongers. Giving sprites a personality is near impossible and creating a structure with controlled peaks and troughs seems to go against the free- range nature of games.

British director Bernard Rose, whose recent film Paperhouse tackled the dreamscape in a more psychologically credible fashion than *Elm Street's* parade of effects, also believes you must be able to manipulate the viewer.

"The whole point of the film [Paperhouse] is the audience feels quite confident with it for the first 40 minutes, that it's quite a nice little film, quite chilling perhaps, then suddenly you come at them with a sledgehammer." But as Horrorsoft's Mike Woodruff observes, if a game doesn't use the complete demolition kit almost immediately you've lost your player.

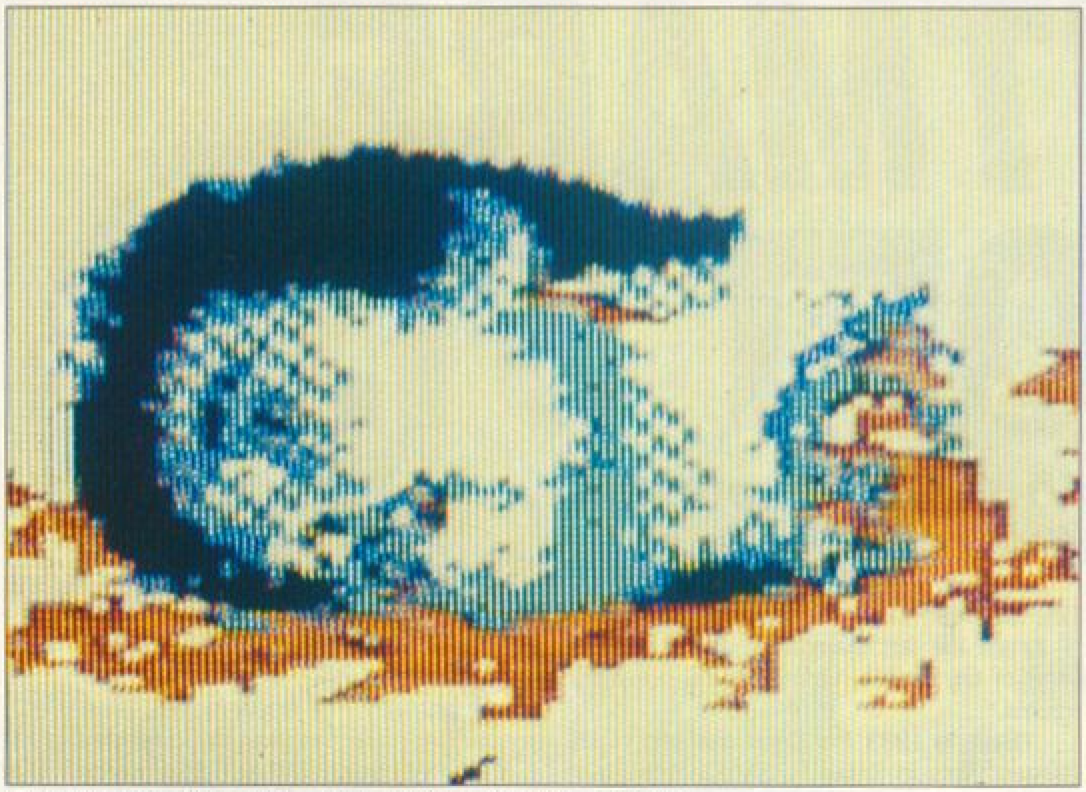
John Gilbert was a computer journalist before he founded award winning *Fear* magazine and was *actively involved in the development* of Piranha's 3D arcade adventure *Nosferatu*. He has doubts about horror and micros.

"We're still looking at glorified *Space Invaders*. People don't know how to handle horror. They don't do it seriously. You can do it in books or film but how do you put it on a computer with the very limited number of techniques available?"

Horror works, he says, because it gives us a buzz escaping our mundane reality and watching nasty things happen to characters on screen. "It plays on people's deepest and darkest secrets."

Englund agrees. "I read something - and I wish this was my quote but it's not - that it's like a little passion play. There's something about the catharsis and the dark and the scares and you address these absolutes of death and things but in the stylised form of the horror movie which is an approved thing we have in the culture."

It's very easy for a programmer to present you with pictures of death and destruction but the threat must be more than mere 'Loss of Life - Try Again' if its to communicate man's mortality and forces of ultimate evil. Sophisticated new forms, harnessing advanced processing power, sound and CD-I graphics, must be developed before games start to make us shiver.



***Frankenstein* from CRL. Horrible in more ways than one...**

route is to recycle the iconography of horror from other media.

This means licensing a film, like Domark and Palace did, or lifting generic images and grafting them, Frankenstein-fashion, onto an existing game formula. Microdeal's *Fright Night* and Ariolasoft's *Werewolves of London* were simply arcade adventures wearing Halloween masks. However much they tested your intellect or joystick technique, they never sent a shiver down the spine.

As Chris Elliott of Eldritch Games, programmers of Electronic Arts' forthcoming *The Hound of Shadow* puts it, "When you have an animated figure it's difficult to make something an inch and a half tall horrific. You can make it grotesque but not horrific".

Not that it's stopped people trying. In the mid-eighties a pair of games, *Go To Hell*, from the ominously named 666 Software and Powerhouse's *Soft and Cuddly* laid on the gore with a shovel. Dig them up nowadays and you'll discover just how un-stomach churning Spectrum pixels are - unless you're particularly sensitive to attribute clash!

Even with today's high resolution machines graphic horror is not the solution, according to Chris Elliott. "You get into the problem that movies have. People soon become blase. So you have to fall over yourself to be more and more gross. It's the law of diminishing returns."

CRL boss Clement Chambers agrees. "People have always said horror is exploitation and some people have taken that exploitation element and not delivered." His solution was to launch a series of adventure games based on the classic monsters, Frankenstein, Dracula and The Wolfman, plus the legend of real life slasher, Jack the Ripper.

Recreating the frisson of reading a horror novel proved more capable of raising goosebumps than aping shock horror films, though CRL still threw in the odd digitised picture of disembowelled damsels as a sop to the gore hounds. Chambers is quick to stress that the games were more than a series of unpleasant stills though: "These games are very visual but the context goes with it."

He's careful to draw the distinction between horror, the recoil in revulsion, and terror, the emotion of fear. "I always thought *Deus Ex Machina* [Automata's experimental life game] was quite terrifying. It's a question of artistry and that's something that's generally missing from this industry. Poe was not bloodthirsty but he was terrifying. We like to have both in our software."

While the CRL series and Infocom's Lovecraft-ian *The Lurking Horror* set out to scare adventurers, a couple of strategy games demonstrated an alternative approach. *Alien* appeared under Argus' Mindgames label while James Herbert's publisher Hodder and Stoughton briefly flirted with software for *The Rats*.

Neither title could be classed an unconditional success but both succeeded in generating suspense rarely found in arcade or adventure games. In *Alien* you searched the ship for the creature while *The Rats* followed the novel closely as you investigated the mysterious rodent killings.

Both were played in real time, forcing you to react quickly. Despite schematic graphics (*Alien* was just a map) sound effects such as a quickening pulse, were used to good effect and the sudden appearance of the alien or rats chewing through the screen provided suitably disturbing climaxes as you prepared to meet your maker... or at least reload.

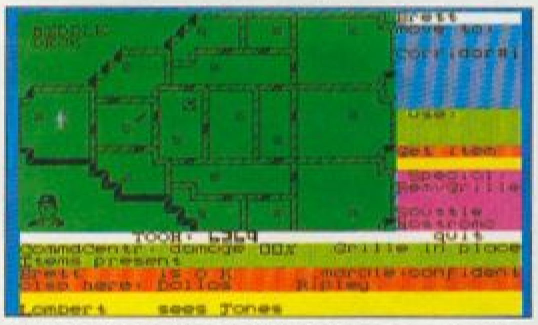
16-BIT SQUIRM?

Hardware has progressed since those 8-bit pathfinders and the horror genre is currently undergoing something of a renaissance... or should that be revengance? Electronic Arts is about to release a horror role playing game based on the works of classic horror writer HP Lovecraft (see box). And Tynesoft has launched a label devoted to terror.

Mike Woodruff, the brain behind Horrorsoft, has been involved in software since its earliest days, producing traditional text adventures including the mildly horrific and highly enjoyable *Gremlins*. Moving with the times he's now producing 16-bit games like *Heroes of the Lance*.

"I noticed that our type of game, the icon driven adventure, is selling well in the America but I thought that they're rather wet and airy

Computer games allow less time to develop an atmosphere than a film. Woodruff admits that he has to hook the player within ten minutes of they'll do something else. However he



***Aliens* from Argus Mind Games – they're still screaming about this one.**

GETTING PAST THE CENSOR

When CRL released its horror adventures it opened another can of maggots. Clement Chambers interpreted the 1984 Video Recordings Act (VRA), introduced as a result of the 'video nasties' scare, as referring to computer games.

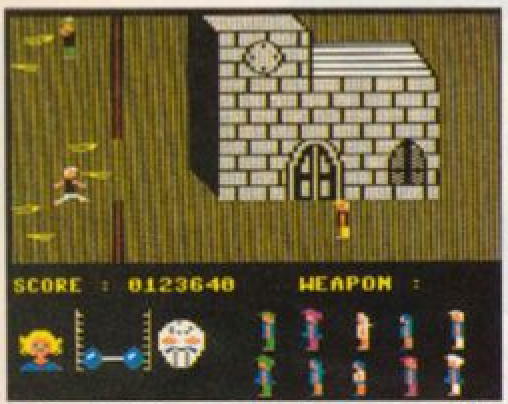
To this day Chambers insists that what he did was merely follow the letter of the law; that a computer game was (to quote the act) a 'video work... any series of visual images (with or without sound) a) produced electronically by the use of information contained on any disc or magnetic tape, and b) shown as a moving picture.'

The VRA states that any such work had to be submitted to the British Board of Film Classification (BBFC), the body responsible for certificating films, if: 'to any significant extent it depicts...) mutilation or torture of, or other acts of gross violence towards humans or animals.'

Despite the fact that, as ACE so carefully pointed out at the time, the act refers to 'moving' pictures, the BBFC's panel played Chambers' games, examined their digitised images, and passed judgment. The classic monsters were rated as fit for 15 year olds but the real life *Jack the Ripper* finally achieved the coveted 18, leading to items on the radio and in the press.

Nowadays you get the idea that the Board is faintly embarrassed by the whole affair. A spokesperson said, "The four CRL programs were submitted voluntarily and probably did quite well in terms of publicity for them but we've had nothing since." As the cost of classification can reach £1000, it's easy to understand why there wasn't a rush to follow CRL's lead.

However this raises an important point. As CD-I becomes a reality, a game which included filmed or animated sequences of a bloodthirsty nature certainly would come within the letter of the law. But unlike a film, which can only be viewed in one, linear fashion, a game is interactive so has no set pattern. Could the BBFC make fair decisions about a medium which is only superficially similar to their area of expertise? Only time will tell...



***Friday 13th* from Domark – a game the company prefer to forget.**

has innovative ideas which harness the potential of the latest machines.

"Imagine if you have a player sitting in the dark with his Amiga wired up to stereo speakers, and he has one by his side and the other by the window. Suddenly there's the sound of a tap from the window and while he looks to see what it is we flash something up on the screen."

"We're approaching it the same way a film director approaches a film. We've got a special language and it's written like a script for graphics, sound and data." Of course to produce this total sensation he requires the player's co-operation in turning down the lights, placing speakers correctly and suspending disbelief, but Woodruff believes this isn't too much to ask of somebody who's spent £25-£30 for the software.

The pioneers of software screams, Dominic Wheatley and Pete Stone, both believe that someday games will have same the power to scare as films or books. "I've never seen it done," says Wheatley, "but I'm sure a game form does exist. I don't know how to do it though. I think that sound is a big element." Stone adds, "In principle I think you will be able to scare people in the future but at the moment advances in technology are not great enough."
fairy. So I decided to produce a more adult product."

This appealed to Tynesoft, as sales director Trevor Scott recalls: "We did some market research and found that horror is massive in all media. But we felt nobody was addressing it in software and you have to do something different in this industry."

Limiting itself to a few quality titles a year, the label is about to follow up *Personal Nightmare* with Elvira. Woodruff says that they will be aimed at the fantasy/Gothic end of the horror spectrum. "You might find a drill in one of the games," he says, "but there won't be a plug on it."

Instead he intends to induce shivers with more restrained images. "In *Personal Nightmare* you have to cut the fingers off a corpse to get a prayer book. I wanted players to grimace as they did it." Another instance occurs in the latest game if you stray into the garden, where a falconer trains his hawk. Suddenly the bird swoops down and tears out your eye. The final image is of the bloody orb clasped in its claw. Did he say restrained?

Woodruff defends the gore by referring to the covers of horror paperbacks and the content of comics like Heavy Metal. Today's viewer expects his horror to have, well, guts. His primary concern is suspense though. "It's like a film. As the heroine walks down the stairs with the lights off you want the audience to go, 'Oh no!'"

LOVECRAFT, HORROR, AND MADNESS

Chris Elliott and Richard Edwards of Eldritch Games, authors of Electronic Arts' *The Hound of Shadows*, are HP Lovecraft afficianados. HP who? Unlike Poe, Lovecraft remains relatively unknown in Britain though films like *The Reanimator* and *From Beyond* are starting to change all that.

Howard Phillips Lovecraft was born in 1890 in New England. A prodigy, he was reading by the age of three and writing a year later. His grandfather's 2,000 volume library left him with a lifelong passion for the 18th century's style and language. However his childhood was isolated and unhappy. His father died in an asylum when he was only eight; his mother was neurotically protective. Paranoia and madness are recurring themes in his work.

He was only 15 when he wrote his first horror story, *The Beast in the Cave*, but soon after turned to verse and essays and it wasn't until 1918 that he resumed writing fiction. His six part story *'Herbert West - Reanimator'* was published in 1922 and soon he was a regular contributor to *Weird Tales* pulp magazine.

For the next fifteen years Lovecraft and his disciples created the Cthulhu Mythos, a completely realised private mythology based around the ancient Great Old Ones, whose followers plotted their return. Though he died of cancer in 1937 his influence on virtually every modern horror writer continues to this day.

"He's not a good writer technically," Elliott admits, "In some ways he's appalling. His one trick is to stick the ending in italics with three dots at the end." But despite the purple prose, Lovecraft touches a nerve.

"There really are things out to get you and the world," says Edwards. "They're not after you personally. They just don't even notice you." "It's the idea of huge, impersonal forces," Elliott continues. "It's ghastly because there are things out there which would drive you mad if you could see them."

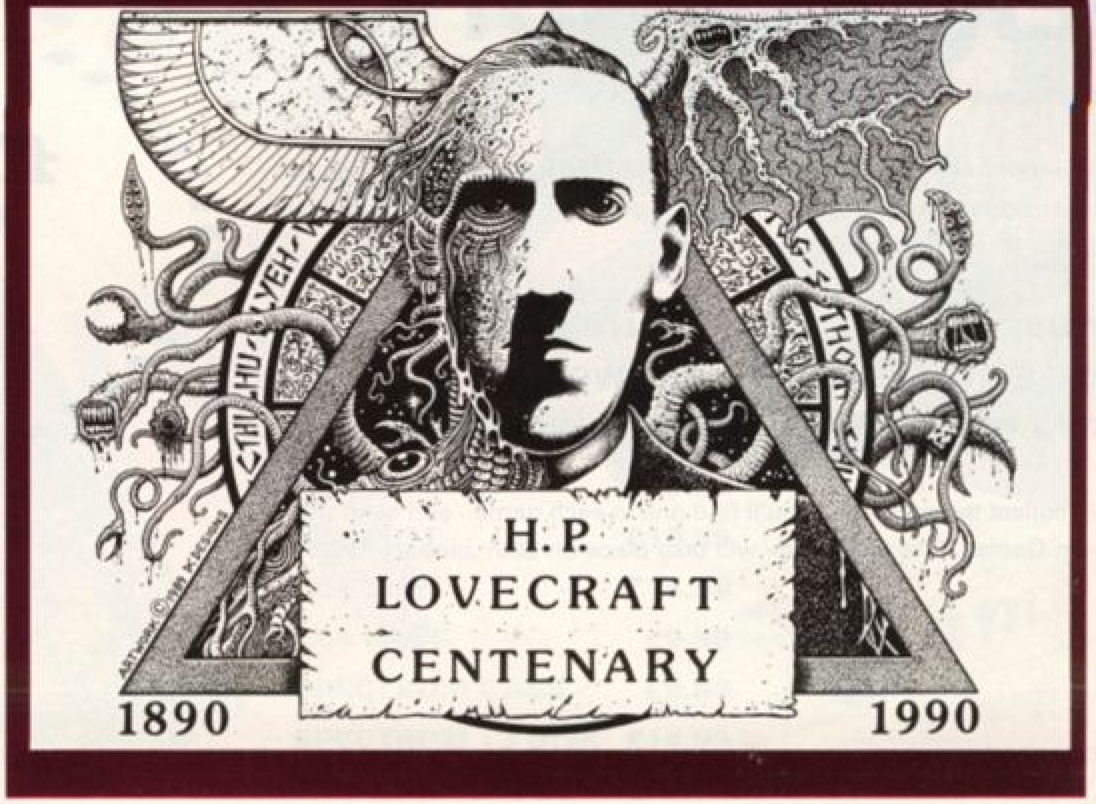
The creation of such a malevolent, paranoid universe, where dreadful secrets haunt the cellars of rotting mansions, calls for innovative game techniques. Eldritch is using role playing to bring Lovecraft to life.

"It's better than the traditional adventure," says Elliott. "That's very much about the collection of objects - there's the feeling of the player being in control. But for the atmosphere of horror you've got to feel that somebody else is in control. The first element of horror is a feeling of helplessness. And role playing is all about character and interaction."

He realises the problems inherent in this though. "Horror is a very fragile atmosphere. With computers you're dealing with an interactive medium which is like no other. But this surrenders any sense of control you have as a storyteller."

"It's very easy to go from horror into farce," Edwards adds. "The wrong word can blow the atmosphere. So *Hound of Shadow* is mostly low key. There's no dripping blood every thirty seconds giving the impression you're walking through a slaughterhouse. So when the horror comes it's more affecting."

Lovecraft transcended stylistic infelicities to terrify us with a world where insignificant man faces omnipotent evil. Eldritch Games also hope to break the boundaries of their medium and give us a glimpse of that mythology...



◆◆VIRGIN's SANTA◆◆

FREE GAMES THIS WAY

Don't miss out on an extra special stocking this Christmas when Sant be awarding the lucky winners with:

5 FIRST PRIZES OF

£1,000 worth of software of your choice, or an Amiga or ST plus £500 of software of your choice

10 SECOND PRIZES OF

£500 worth of software of your choice

20 THIRD PRIZES OF

£250 worth of software of your choice

1000 RUNNER UP PRIZES TOO!

Any one of the six Virgin Games arcade classics mentioned earlier.

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TWICE THIS YEAR!

HERE WE GO! ....

WIN £30,00 WORTH OF PRIZES

Virgin Games have decided to become a Santa and hand out £30,000 worth of fabulous goodies. All you have to do to gain from Santa's generosity is to buy any three of these games:

SHINOBI
DOUBLE DRAGON II
GEMINI WING
CONTINENTAL CIRCUS
SILKWORM
NINJA WARRIORS

Simply collect three tokens - you'll find one in each game - and send them to Virgin Games. The prize draw will take place on 29th January 1990.

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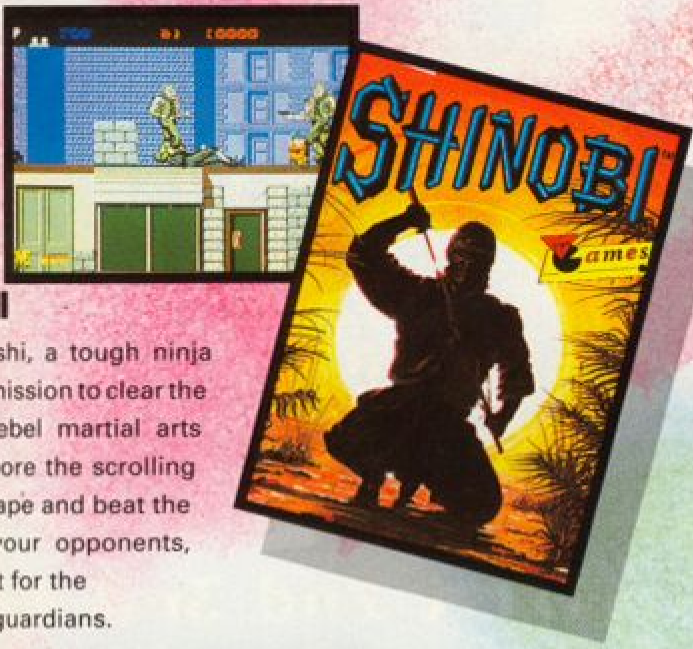
VIRGIN's SANTA discover why!



SHINOBI

You're masashi, a tough ninja warrior on a mission to clear the town from rebel martial arts fanatics. Explore the scrolling urban landscape and beat the hell out of your opponents, but watch out for the end-of-level guardians.

Games
SILK WORM

SILKWORM

It's not true! Even after months of negotiation with the Ruskies and despite a mass exodus out of Afghanistan, we're still under threat. There's no one left to press the Nuke button so the battle has switched to copters and plane. Non-stop shoot-'em-up arcade action.

CONTINENTAL CIRCUS
TAITO

CONTINENTAL CIRCUS

Compete in formula one races in Brazil, America, France, Monaco, Germany, Spain and Japan, Race hard, but watch out for other cars. Colliding can be fatal. And do visit the pits for fuel and repairs.

Gemini Wing

GEMINI WING

The aliens have had enough. They're not going to take their brethren being blasted on computer screen any more. So they've come down in their hordes to blast the pitiful race of carbon-based life forms called humans. Can you stop them? Somebody has to do it.

NINJA WARRIORS

COMING SOON!

Can you survive brutal enemy onslaught? Fight with hand, foot and dagger to rid the street of the scum that dare infest your home town. A classic arcade conversion.

DOUBLE DRAGON

COMING SOON!

DOUBLE DRAGON II

Ferocious two-player simultaneous martial arts mayhem. Evil fiends have captured your girlfriend - it's up to you and your brother to rescue her. Don't fail. Through the town, countryside, mountains and finally into the lair. Use whatever weapons you can find to stay alive.

ALL AVAILABLE ON	
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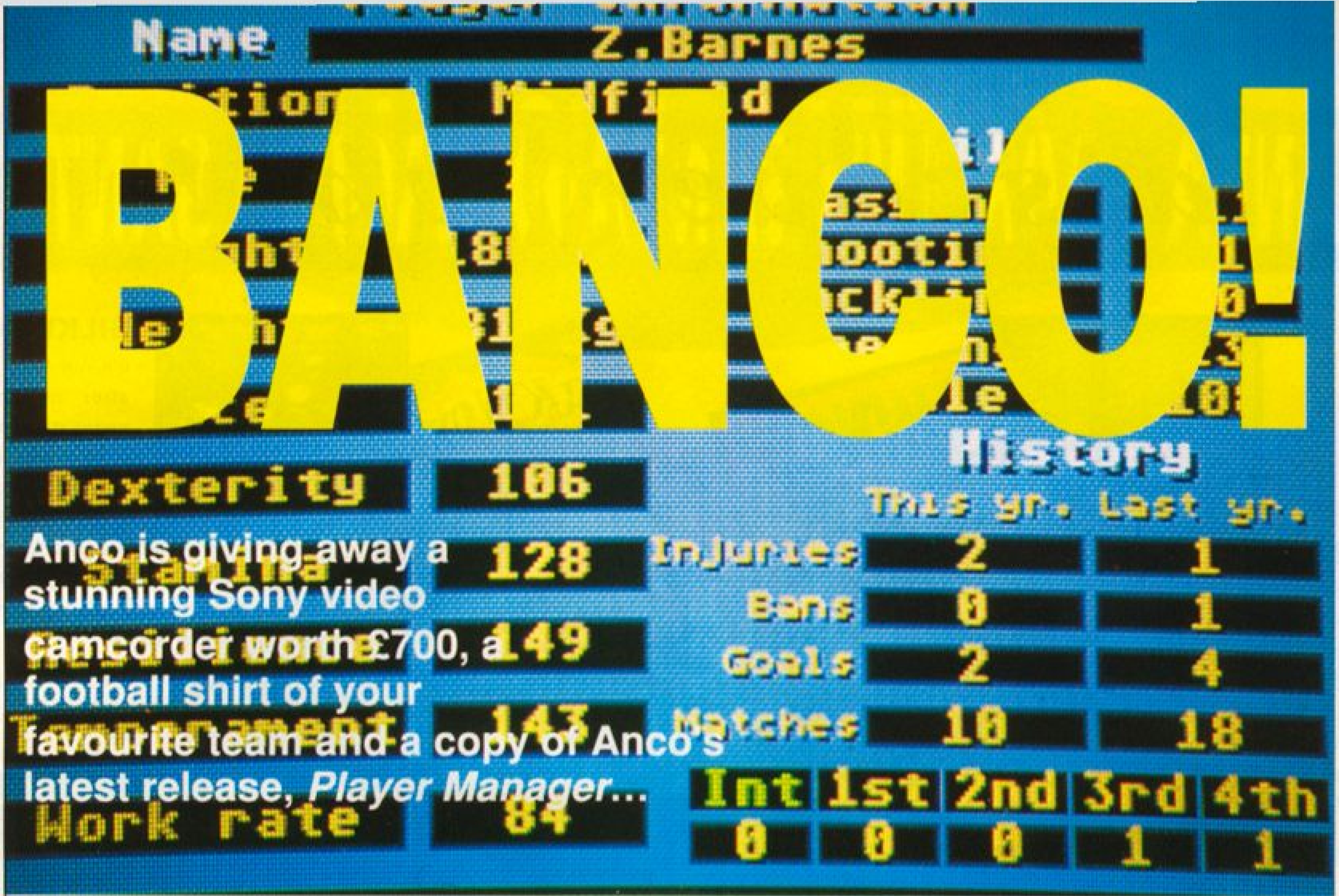
C64 DISK	£14.99
C64 CASS	£9.99
SPECTRUM CASS	£9.99
SPECTRUM +3 DISK	£14.99
AMSTRAD CASS	£9.99
AMSTRAD DISK	£14.99

VIRGIN GAMES
2-4 VERNON YARD
119 PORTOBELLO ROAD
LONDON W11 2DX



BANCO!

Anco is giving away a stunning Sony video camcorder worth £700, a football shirt of your favourite team and a copy of Anco's latest release, *Player Manager*...

Anco's latest release "brings the quality of *Kick Off* to the art of football management"... As the newly appointed Player Manager and international class player, you take charge of a third division club with just one simple objective: 'bring back the glory days!'

Player Manager is split into four distinct objectives: playing skills of the manager (on-pitch action using a modified version of *Kick Off*), managerial skills (get the right tactics and players to form a winning team), tactics (choose from four well proven tactics or design your own ingenious combinations of defense and offense) and players (over 1000 players to choose from, each with their own attributes like shooting, pace and aggression)...

...And that's just for starter's, other factors to be taken into consideration include refs, injuries and disciplinary problems. But who said it was going to be easy?

Player Manager is available now on ST and Amiga for £19.95dk – with Spectrum, Amstrad and C64 £9.95cs/£14.95dk due soon. Meanwhile, don't forget Anco are hard at work on *Kick Off II* – and they're eager for suggestions from current *Kick Off* players. Pop your suggestions on the postcard along with your entry (don't worry – they don't count in the competition).

Video your local footie team and the Big Match with this Sony CCDF250 Camcorder

SONY
Handycam

The Sony CCDF250 is the latest addition to Sony's extensive, and award winning, camcorder range.

Featuring a 6x power zoom, insert edit facility, high speed shutter (1/50 - 1/1000) and 7 lux capability, the £699.95 CCDF250 is designed to introduce the joys of video photocopy to a wider audience...

THE SECRET OF SUCCESS...

So how do you get your grubby hands on a Sony camcorder, torso in a footie-shirt or a copy of *Player Manager* into your micro? Easy! Just answer the following questions:

1. Which football team won the FA Cup in 1981?
(a) Liverpool (b) Arsenal (c) Tottenham

2. Which football team won the FA Cup in 1982?
(a) Liverpool (b) Arsenal (c) Tottenham

3. Finally, tell us which are your two favourite sections or articles in this month's ACE, and your two LEAST favourite sections. Don't worry – there are no 'right answers' for this question. We just want to hear your views, and whatever you say will in no way affect the outcome of the competition.

Please write your answers (in BLOCK CAPITALS) on the back of a postcard. Don't forget to include your full name, address and telephone number. Don't forget to include the following details: your computer and your favourite football team.

Send your completed postcard to:
ACE ANCO COMPETITION, Priory Court,
30-32 Farringdon Lane, London EC1R
3AU.

THE PRIZES

The Sony CCDF250 camcorder will be awarded to the first entry giving the correct answers to questions (1) and (2) drawn at random from the entries received prior to the closing date. A football team shirt (of the winners own team choice) will be awarded to the second correct entry and a copy of *Player Manager* will be awarded to the third correct entry drawn.

THE RULES

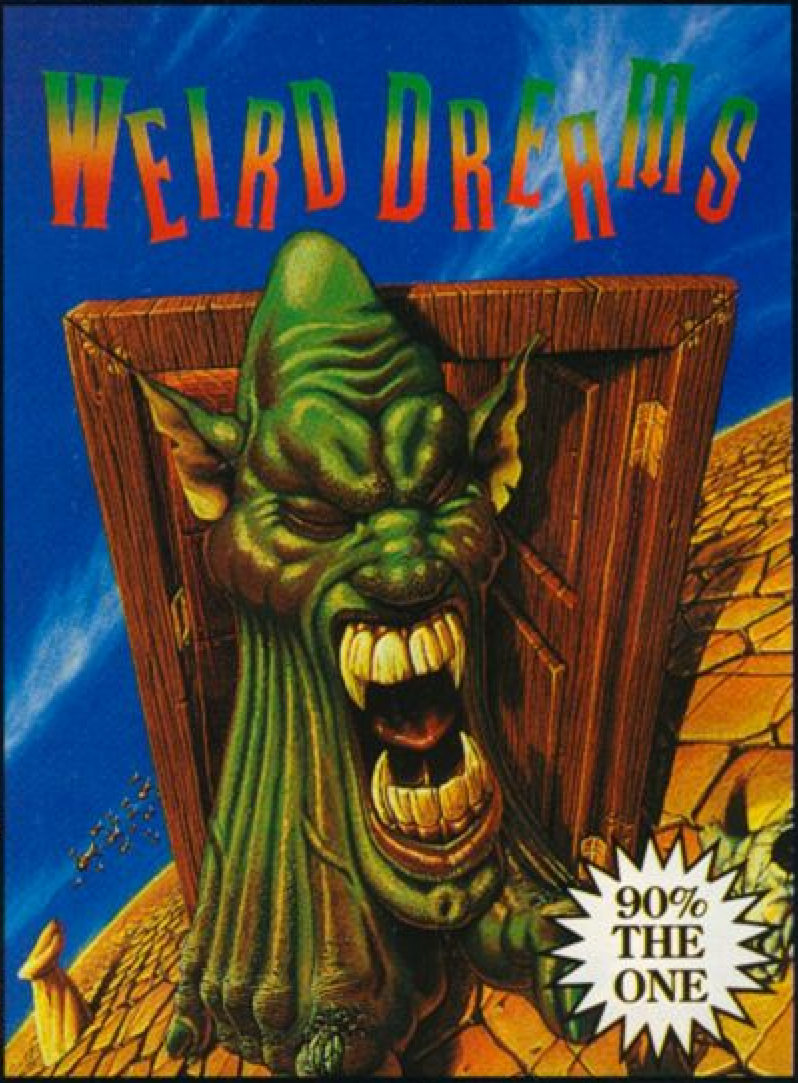
(1) The closing date for entries is 7th December, 1989.
(2) Employees of EMAP, ANCO and SONY are not eligible for entry.
(3) The editors decision is final and no correspondence will be entered into.

RAINBIRD

OUT OF THIS WORLD

TOWER OF BABEL

An intricate 3D strategy game involving an interconnecting network of towers, platforms and lifts all rendered in solid 3D with innovative light and shading techniques. Take control of robot spiders and program them to solve problems and puzzles and interact with other creatures, such as Pushers, Zappers and Grabbers. Alternatively, real time control is available to you at any time for instantaneous reaction to the game's developments. For the more adventurous among you, there is a complete game designer, allowing the construction of your own series of towers, platforms and lifts. Attempt to fox your friends with your own fiendishly difficult creations. More than just a game, more than just a puzzle – Tower of Babel is a whole new concept in strategy gaming.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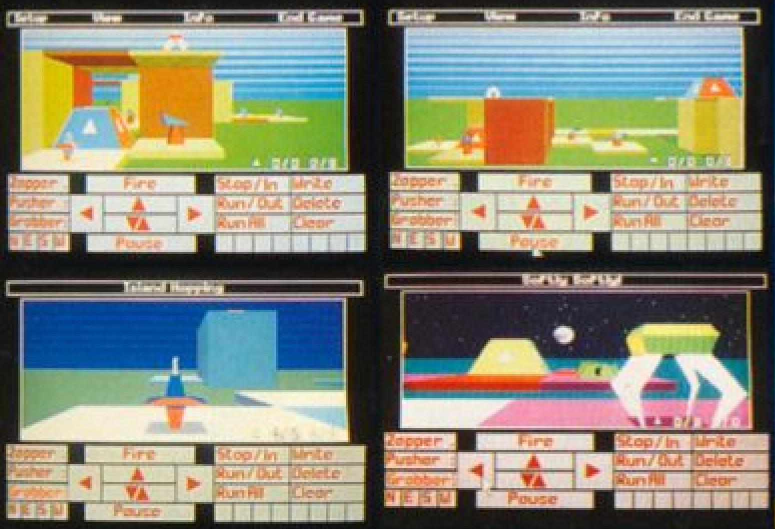
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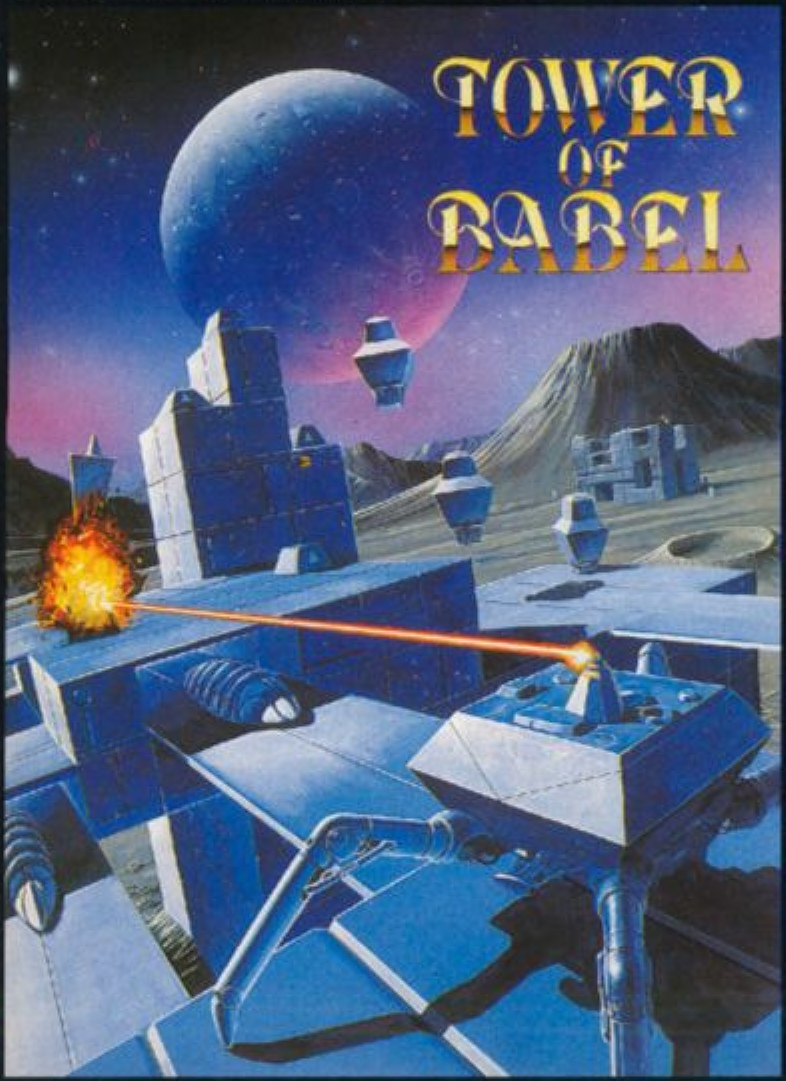
Softly Softly!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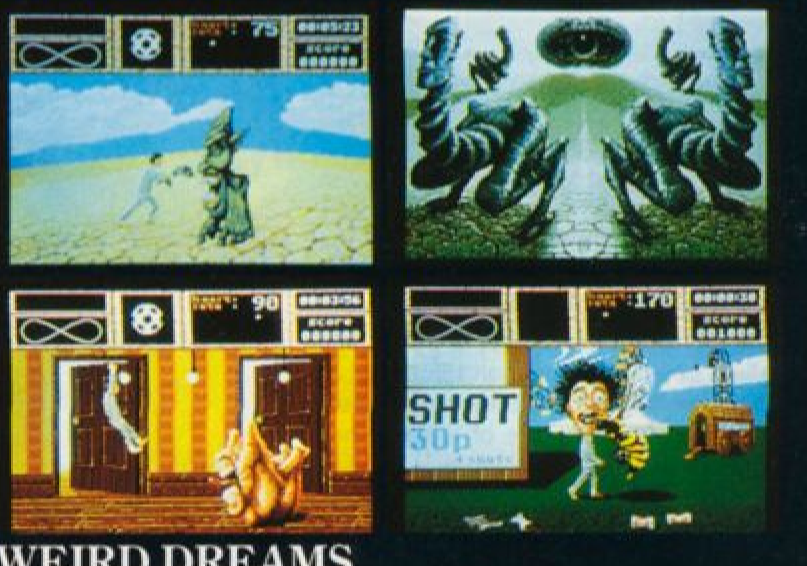

score
SHOT 30p

WEIRD DREAMS

A RIDE ALONG THE ROCKY ROAD OF SUBCONSCIOUS THOUGHT, WITHOUT SHOCK ABSORBERS.

Imagine yourself in a world full of nightmares with Dali-Esque creatures & mind eating eyes. Picture yourself in an upside down landscape Alone in a weird dream & wondering what the . . .

"Weird Dreams is stunning. It's one of the most bizarre concepts yet seen on a computer being more of an experience than a game".

MASTERS OF STRATEGY
A DIVISION OF
MICROPROSE SOFTWARE

MicroProse, Unit 1, Hampton Road Industrial Estate, Tetbury, Glos, GL8 8DA.

A PORTRAIT OF THE ARTIFICE

Since the birth of photography the camera has been consistently manipulated to do the one thing its exponents said it couldn't - lie. At no time though, has it lied more inventively and efficiently than at the present. With the increasingly common use of computers in design and, in particular advertising, image manipulation has become an exercise in creative duplicity. The recent 'Machine Dreams' exhibition at London's Photographer's Gallery illustrated what happens when you give artists the latest in state-of-the-art machinery to play with. Mike Pattenden went along to take a look at the results.

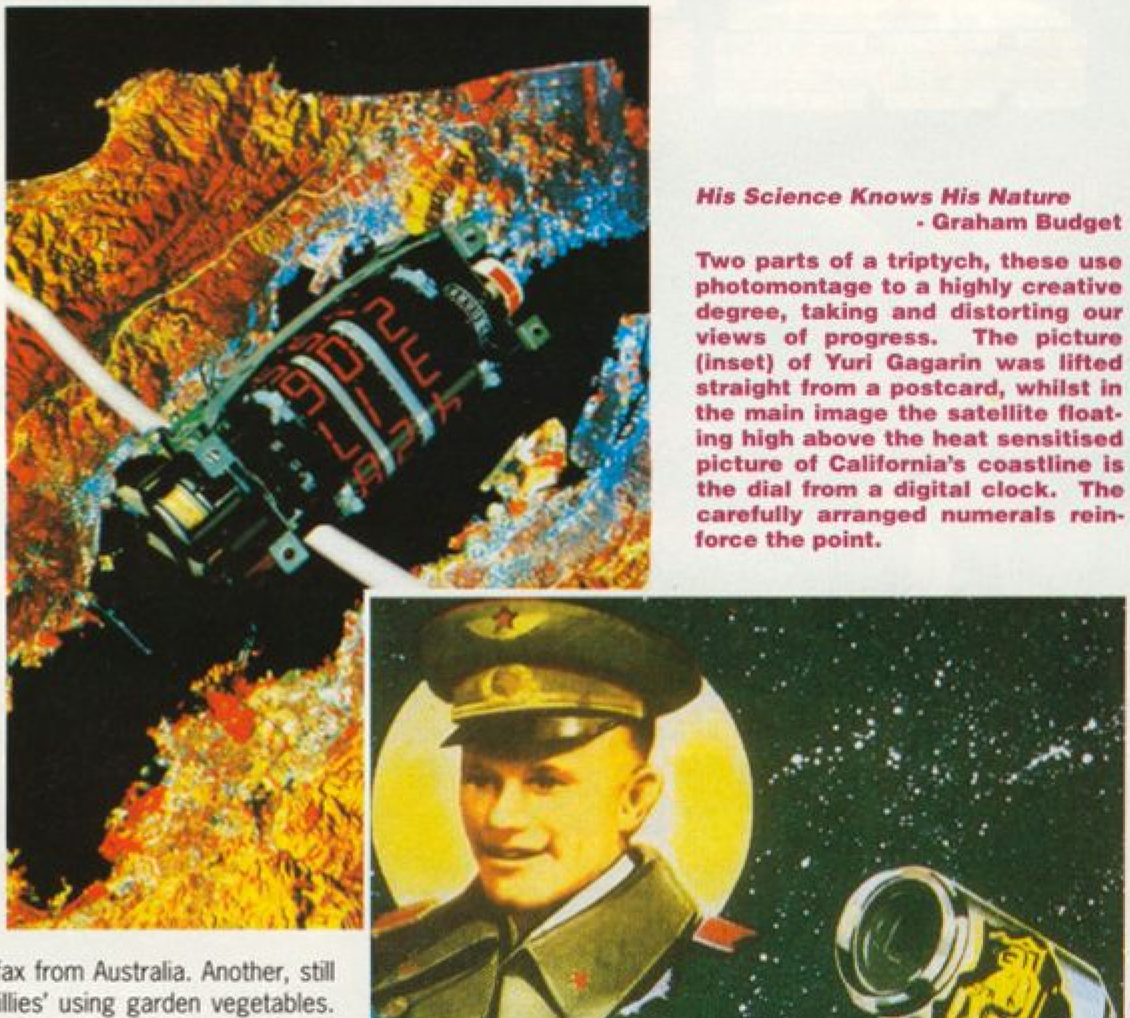
Nearly every advertisement you see in national magazines like the Sunday supplements has been manipulated in some way. Often the colours have been changed, an area has been darkened, a blemish removed, and sometimes whole segments have been created by repeating a section of the image many times.

Since the advent of computer screens with very high-resolution screens linked to publishing tools like scanners this kind of image distortion is commonplace. It's simply no longer safe to believe your eyes.

The reaction of the half dozen artists who were offered the systems to use was not to attempt to create some sort of perfect image using the multitude of tools at their disposal, but to demonstrate their consummate ability to deceive. Frequently conflicting images were juxtaposed against each other to make the point.

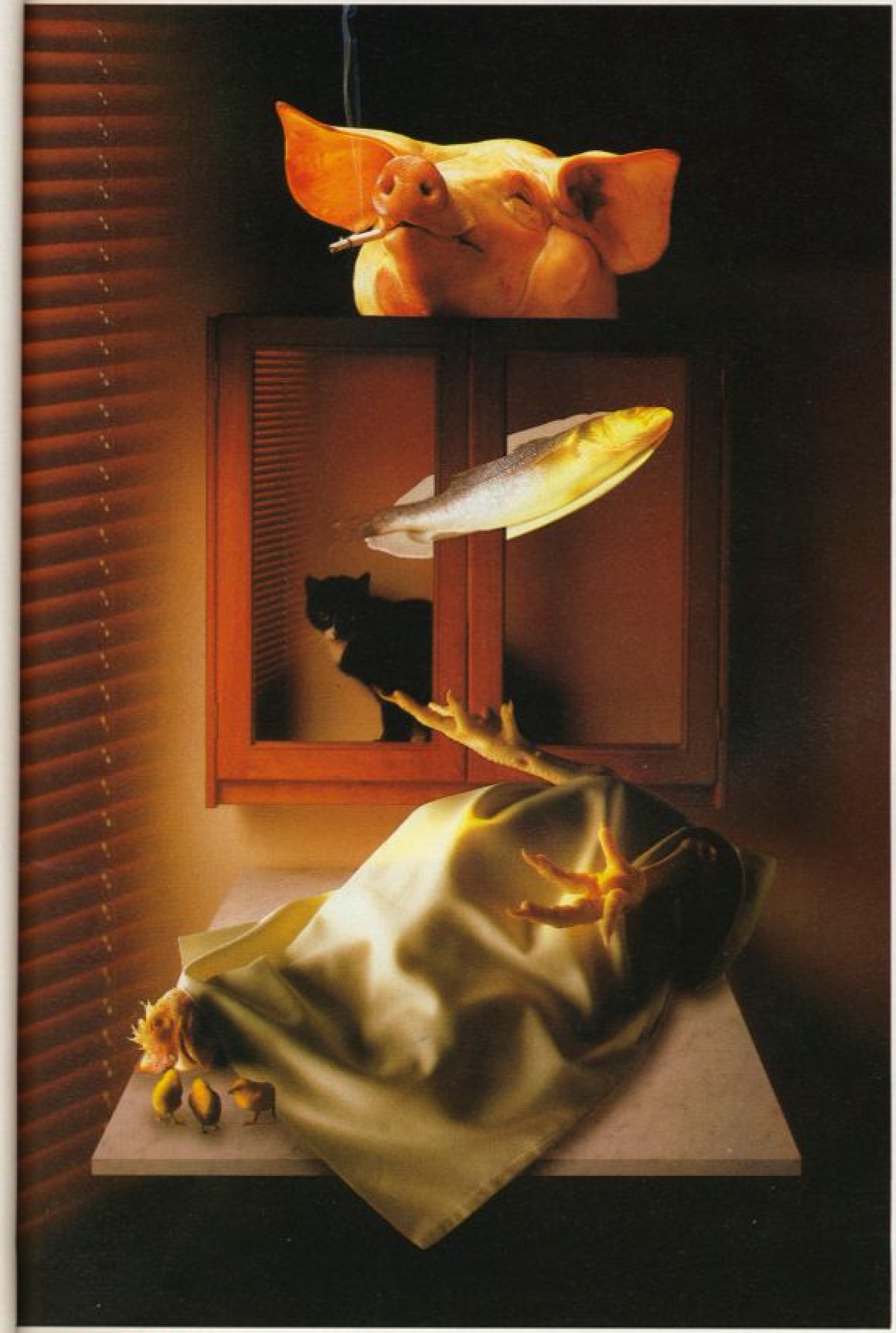
Photographer David Godbold took a nineteenth century black and white etching of Napoleon surveying troops across a bay, coloured it and subtracted nearly all the soldiers from the scene to create an almost picturesque scene, demonstrating a falsification of history. All this, moreover, was without the artist ever seeing the actual print, it was produced by communicating via fax from Australia. Another, still more impressive, recreated Monet's 'Water Lillies' using garden vegetables. Commercial artist Tessa Traegar multiplied images (the arched bridge, for example,was composed of a string of cucumbers) and then smeared them to create the effect of movement and reflected colour.

The attitude of nearly all the artists to the technology they were dealing with was one of wariness and not a little suspicion. With some reason perhaps because the distortion of truth that such systems offer is frightening. The



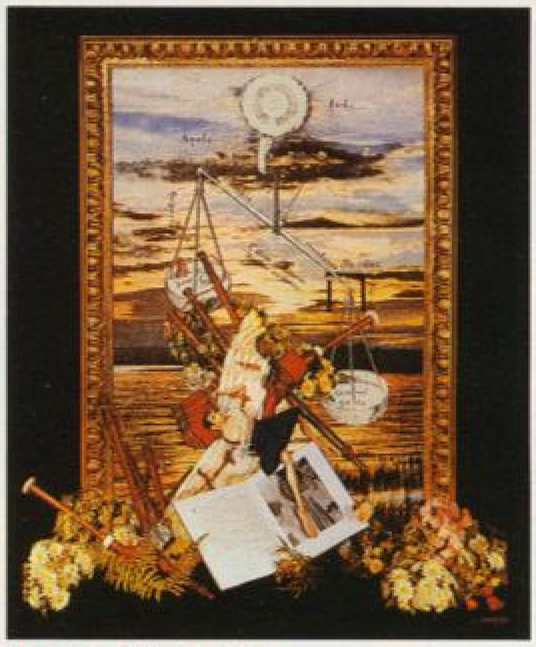
***His Science Knows His Nature* - Graham Budget**

Two parts of a triptych, these use photomontage to a highly creative degree, taking and distorting our views of progress. The picture (inset) of Yuri Gagarin was lifted straight from a postcard, whilst in the main image the satellite floating high above the heat sensitised picture of California's coastline is the dial from a digital clock. The carefully arranged numerals reinforce the point.



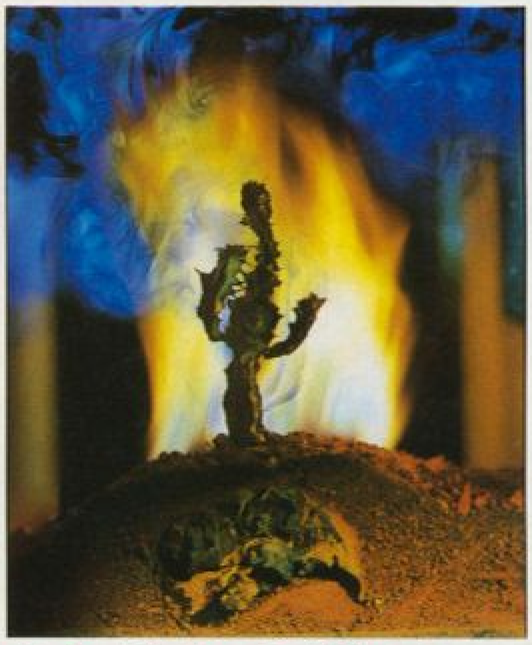
Pig **- Mick Dean**

This is a composite of four transparencies: a pig's head, a fish on a plate, some chicks and a cat in a glass cupboard.



Icarus **- Calum Colvin**

Assembled from several transparencies and an etching, each of differing proportions to create a seamless montage. attention to detail is shown in the way that even the highlights on the solid objects suggest that all the light has originated from the same source.



Heat and Shadows **- David Hiscock**

This artist is known for the way he takes images and disfigures them, often by scratching them. Using the Crosfield he was able to take two transparencies and then using the paint option to smear the *flames and smoke in other colours.*

CIA in America have long been researching into the power of visual communication or 'perception mangement' as they call it.

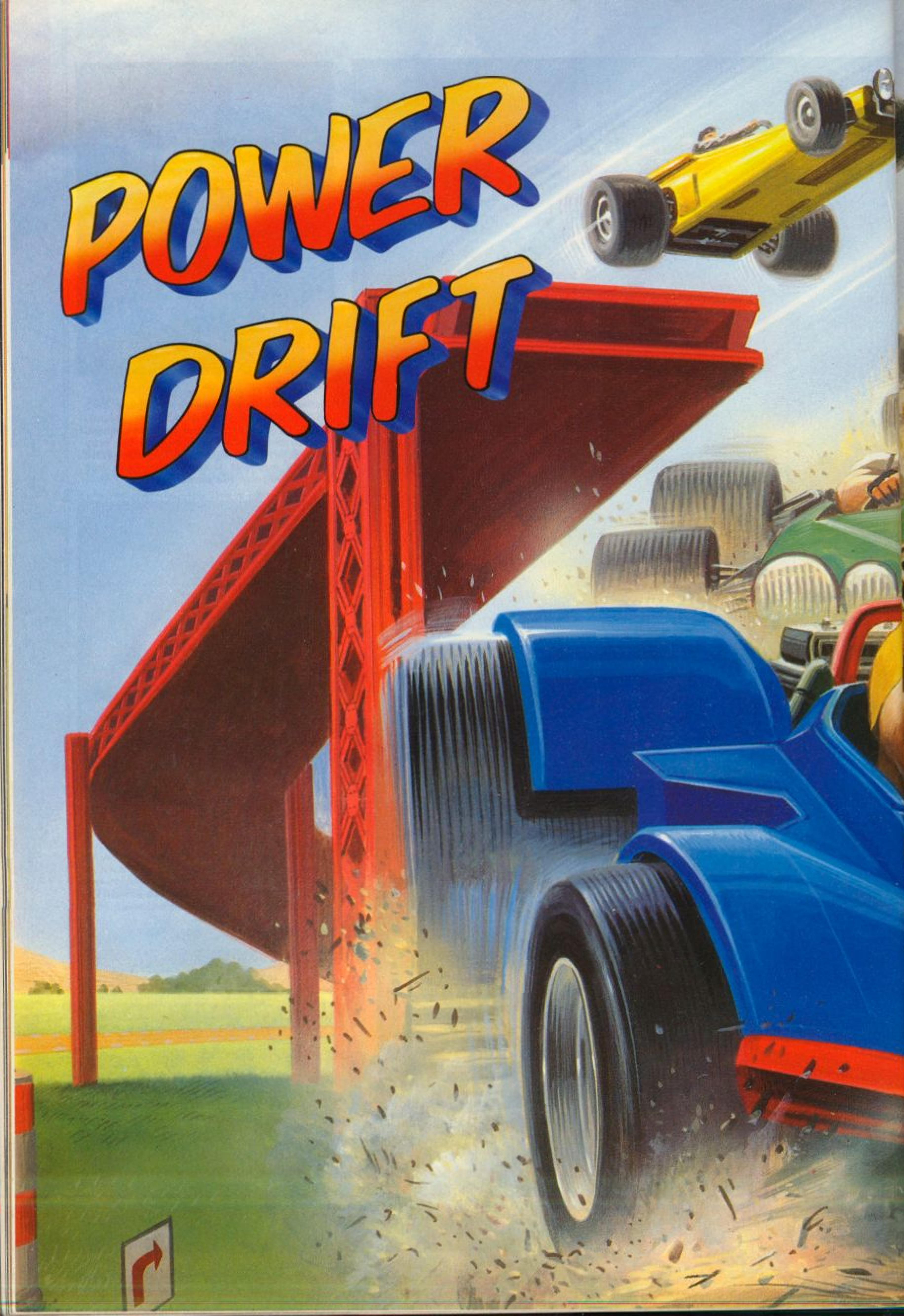
Rightly, a medium which is so obviously open to misuse should be approached with care, the possibilities are only as limited as the imagination. It would be interesting to have seen an artist subvert the system to their own ends. Only then will art lead technology, not technology lead art.

Machine Dreams can be found at the Photographer's Gallery, 5&8 Great Newport Street, London WC2 (8311772) until Nov 4.

THE SYSTEMS

Sophisticated computer imaging equipment made all the pictures in the exhibition possible. Artists were offered use of a Crosfield Imaginator II,Quantel Graphic Paintbox, and a Scitex Imager System. The Crosfield is based on a 386 PC with a colour scanner and an 8000 line per inch high resolution monitor. With a number of transparencies in memory (a 10"x8" will fill approximately 40 million bytes of data) the options exist to cut paste, redraw and superimpose. A paintbox of a staggering 6 million colours means that images can be retouched in any colour imaginable. The finished image can be output direct as a 5"x4" transparency. An Imaginator II will set you back about £50,000 if you're interested. The system is currently in use on Today newspaper and Time magazine.

POWER DRIFT



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START
AMIGA SCREEN SHOTS SHOWN

IN POLE POSITION...

It's fast... it's furious... it's POWER DRIFT!

Choose from twelve wacky drivers, like Jason the Skinhead or Jeronimo the Mohican and rev your way through 27 stomach churning circuits!

Watch the dust fly and the wheels spin as you screech over a 'roller coaster' track and wave goodbye to your opponents!

Roar over mounds of mud, drive through the desert, slip 'n' slide on snow-covered tarmac and race your way through the night to face the final lap!

CAREFUL! Power Drift is no easy ride!

If you're heading for a collision hold onto your seat and enjoy those 360 degree spins before you bump back down to earth!

Burn some rubber, put your foot to the floor and scream back to the winning post!!

ACTIVISION SEGA

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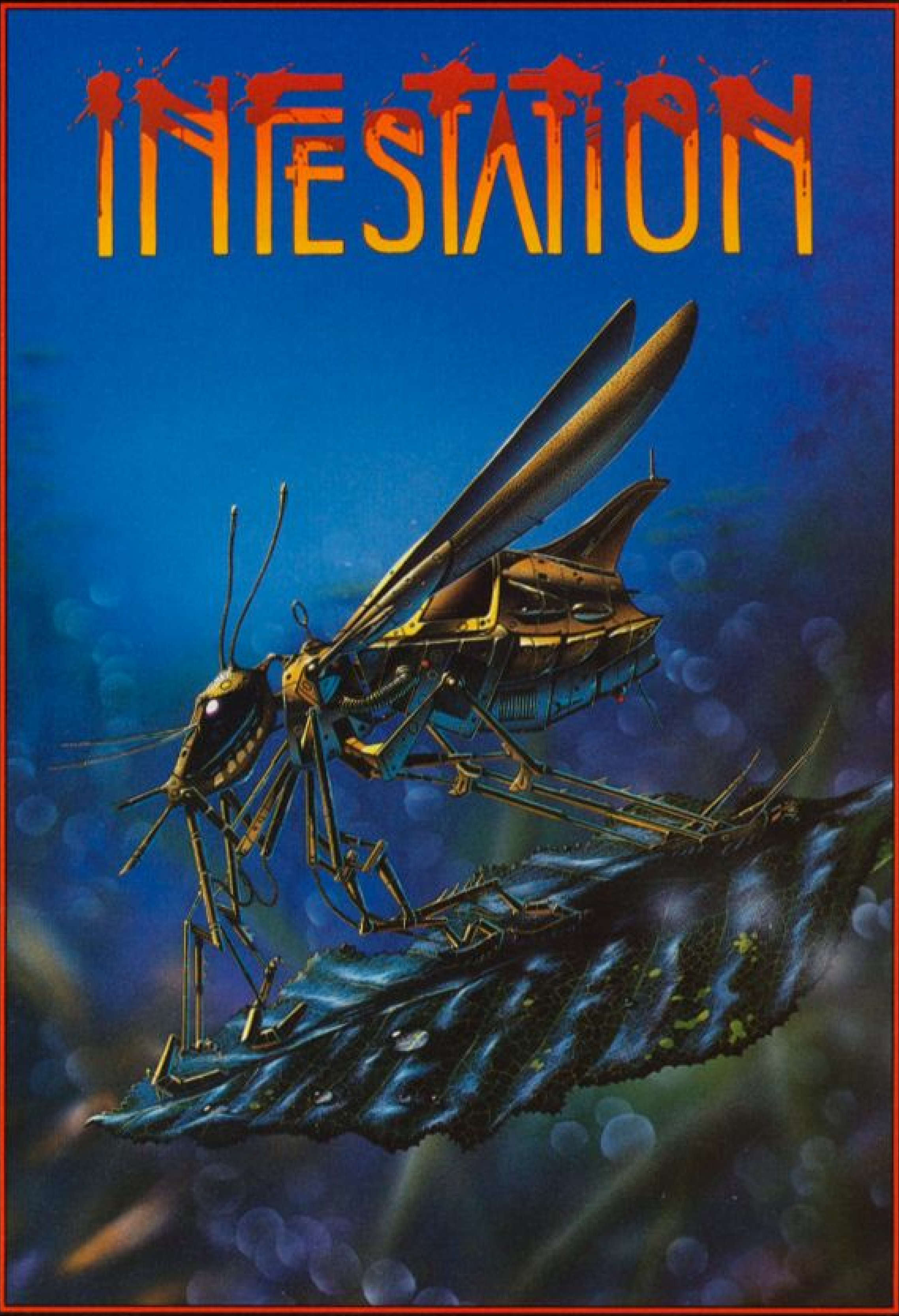
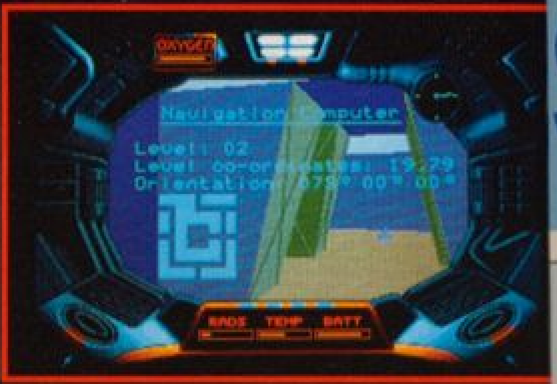

INFESTATION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OXYGEN
Infra-Red active
RADS TEMP BATT

INFESTATION

Are you ready for a new level of realism in computer games? Are you prepared for an atmospheric experience you will never forget? Can you cope with super-fast solid 3D vector graphics? Will you venture into the unknown, alone, and armed only with a single pulse rifle? Can you overcome the INFESTATION?

INFESTATION takes computer games to a new level of realism. It creates a complete environment stunningly rendered in super-fast solid 3D vector graphics. You are completely free to move within the game world, examining and manipulating objects just as you would in a real world. And, as in reality, you are not alone. Only, unlike those on Earth, the other occupants of Infestation's world are not very friendly at all . . .

Your task as Kal Solar, Agent of the Interplanetary Federation, is to travel to Alpha II, investigate and end the alien threat. Your mission will not be an easy one. As well as the mother alien and its eggs, you will have to deal with hostile droids and computer systems, radioactive areas, and things unknown.

INFESTATION is a truly atmospheric experience. Don't play this game when you're alone . . . it may well be your last!

Screen Shots from the Atari ST version AMIGA/ATARI ST £24.95

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SCREEN TEST

PIC CURVE POWER

The PIC – Predicted Interest Curve – is the most sophisticated reviewing tool around. Here's why...

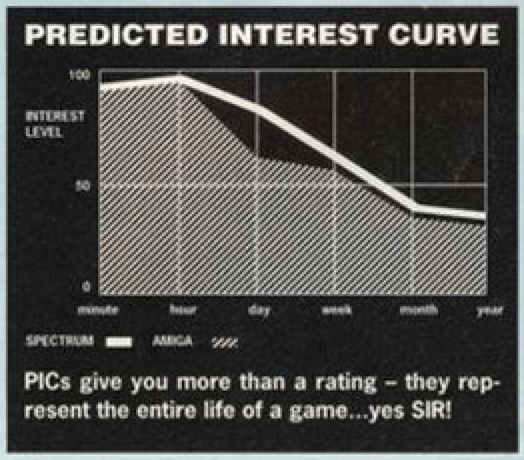
The curve is divided into six sections, indicating the player's adrenalin level after one minute, one hour, one day, one week, one month, and one year. But this tells you an awful lot than just what your interest level will be at any given time (although that's obviously important in itself)...

For example, a high one minute rating means that the game must look fantastic and get you all excited from the word go. That means it's probably a good game to show off to the neighbours – after all, they probably aren't going to pay attention for much more than a minute, after which they'll go back to drinking coffee and making rude remarks about 'those awful hostile games the boys play these days'.

The minute, hour, and day ratings can tell you a lot about a game too. If there's a dip here, followed by a rise, you've got a game that may take a bit of getting into – not recommended if you like to get down to something quick and easy. Alternatively, the graphics may put you off for a while until the gameplay starts to grip. Check out the PIC comment for more details.

Finally, you've got the month and year ratings. The better a game holds up here the more deserving it is of your hard earned cash.

PIC curve construction takes a lot of playing on the part of ACE reviewers. PIC curve analysis is an art in itself. The reward is knowing just what you're getting when you make the decision to splash out on *Mutant Macdonald Gettysburgers*....or *F15 Strike Eagle II* – just one of this month's excellent examples of today's software technology.



PICs give you more than a rating – they represent the entire life of a game...yes SIR!

Star Trek V – the legend continues on pages 52/53 as the Enterprise boldly goes over the top once again...

DON'T FORGET THE UPDATES!

PC *Carrier Command* is this month's Truly Great Conversion, but then *Stunt Car* for the C64 isn't something to moan about either. Check out pp99/102.

THE ACE REVIEWING SYSTEM

PIC CURVES

This unique feature to the ACE reviewing system charts the interest level that a game stimulates over a period of time. The curve is accompanied by a comment to explain why it's the shape it is. Find out more in the Pic Curve Power panel on this page...

Each review also carries special 'Version Boxes' that give you details of the game's implementation on a specific machine. These boxes include ratings for...

GRAPHICS

All aspects of the game's graphics with the limitations of each machine taken into account. A good-looking Spectrum game will thereforee score higher than an average-looking Amiga one.

AUDIO

The music and sound effects are rated here. A high rating is possible on even limited machines like the Spectrum and PC if the computer's shortcomings are cleverly sidestepped.

IQ FACTOR

Yes, sometimes you have to use your brain. This rating evaluates the risk of mental effort – which some people actually enjoy...Note that ACE readers are generally reckoned to be more intelligent than other human beings, so the ratings may be lower than you expect...

FUN FACTOR

Basically a measure of mindless addictiveness. Games like *Arkanoid* and *Flying Shark* require virtually zero brain power but are still remarkably addictive. Most coin-ops score well here because they are designed for instant satisfaction. Games don't have to be *either* fun *or* intelligent – they can be both.

ACE RATING

This is not just plucked out of the air but is calculated from the area under the PIC Curve. To get a really high rating a game will not only have to be very addictive but stand the test of time as well. Just because a game does not get over 900 does not mean we are not recommending it – the following is a general guide to what the ratings mean.

900+ A classic game, recommended without reservation.

800-899 A superb game, but perhaps lacking the long-term depth to last into the month and year categories.

700-799 Still highly recommended, but probably has a couple of aspects to the gameplay that take the edge off it.

600-699 The 'fair' zone, where it tends to be very good 'if you like that sort of thing'.

500-599 This still has good things going for it, but the game clearly has some noticeable problems.

400-499 Problems with gameplay and programming make this an inferior game.

300-399 Not only is the gameplay bad but the design was probably flawed in the first place.

200-299 Things are getting really serious now...

100-199 ZX81 games running on an Amiga.

Under 100 Nothing has ever achieved this appalling level of rating. If anything ever does, it wouldn't even be worth having it for free.

VERSION BOXES

This covers version-specific information on graphics, audio, loading problems etc. If there's no box for your machine but a version is planned, it'll be covered as an update in a later issue.

THE TEAM

..includes *Steve Cooke*, one of the original editors of this award-winning magazine, known to thousands through his many other previous identities, including Zzap!'s White Wizard, The Pilgrim, and Old Baldy.

Eugene Lacey is the man who put Britain's top-selling games magazine, C&VG, on the map. Luckily for us, Eugene got fed up with writing for 8-year olds and decided the time had come to tackle thechallenge of ACE magazine. As one of Britain's most experienced games journalists, his word is LAW.

Laurence Scotford is ACE's new staff writer – Laurence has been playing games since he was nipper, but some of them we probably ought not to mention. There was hot competition for the ACE Staff Writer position from gamesters all over the country, but Laurence pipped them all at the post by showing that he could not only push a game to its limit, but he could push a pen too and tell you all about it.

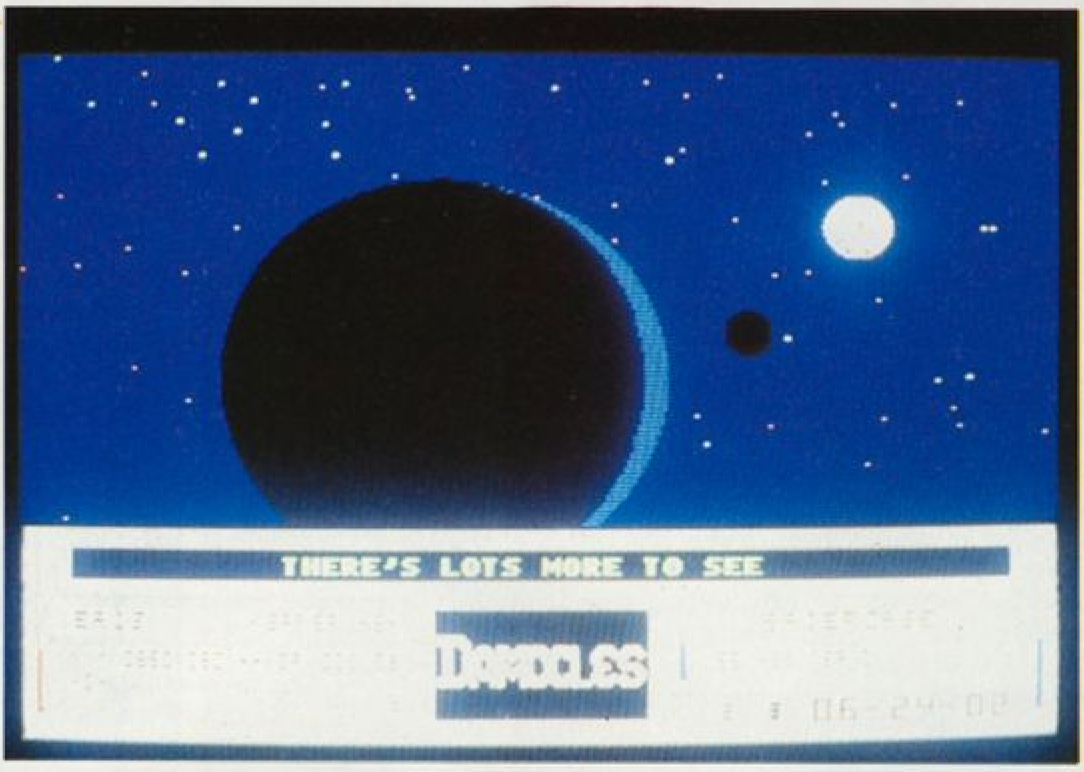
Other reviewers include *Kati Mamza* and *Gordon Houghton*, both of whom used to provide the reviewing talent for 'another magazine' but decided that ACE was worthier of their talents.

Finally, ***Mike Pattenden*** is editor of Commodore User, one Britain's most prestigious Commodore magazines. What Mike doesn't know about software could be written on a 6502...

We don't review anything until we are 100% certain that we've got it right. We've checked them out thoroughly – now you can too.

DAMOCLES

Trouble with Novagen comets


THERE'S LOTS MORE TO SEE

Approaching Eris at warp speed.

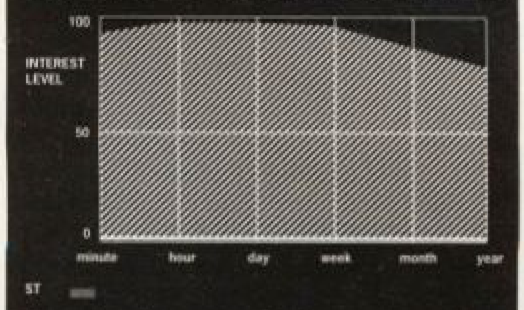
DAMOCLES is a giant comet hurtling through space on a direct collision course with the planet Eris. Having successfully escaped from the planet Targ in *Mercenary* the player must stop the comet from colliding with the planet in three hours time.

To have played *Mercenary* is an advantage as the game play structure is similar, and you can save the items that you collected on Targ and use them in the new game. It is not essential though – as *Damocles* is a self contained challenge.

The first thing that will strike you when *Damocles* performs its breath taking opening sequence is the quality of the 3D effects. Paul Woakes has improved on the 3D solid vector technique employed in *Mercenary* with greater speed, smoothness, and detail. The excellence of *Damocles* graphics – with its sunsets, landscapes and architecture provides further evidence of David Braben's (author of *Elite* and *Virus*) claim in last month's ACE that there is still a long way to go in 3D on 16-bit computers.

Paul Woakes was one of the people who pushed the limits of 8-bit 3D gaming. *Damocles* will do the same in the 16-bit area – though Novagen regrets that it's not going to be able to implement the game design on 8-bit machines. Bad news for the loyal army of C64 owning *Mercenary* fans.

PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE



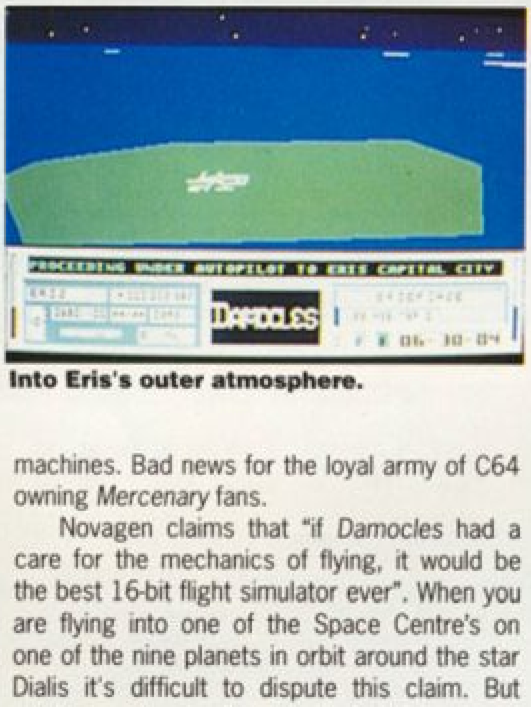
***Damocles* is so open and easy to get into, has a challenge that you can do in different ways, ignore if you want to, and still enjoy.**

ST VERSION

Novagen has stretched the ST to its limits in *Damocles*. The speed of 3D imaging has to be seen to be believed – and without any loss of accuracy in the graphics. The ST has to support powerful maths routines to simulate the sunsets, movement of the planets, and the 3D world of Damocles – all of which it handles admirably. Colours are dramatic and convincing. Good, though sparse, use of sound.

GRAPHICS	**9**	**IQ FACTOR**	**9**
AUDIO	**7**	**FUN FACTOR**	**9**

ACE RATING 935


PROCEEDING UNDER AUTOPILOT TO ERIS CAPITAL CITY

Into Eris's outer atmosphere.

Novagen claims that "if *Damocles* had a care for the mechanics of flying, it would be the best 16-bit flight simulator ever". When you are flying into one of the Space Centre's on one of the nine planets in orbit around the star Dialis it's difficult to dispute this claim. But whether Novagen's boast is true or not doesn't really matter as the main attraction of *Damocles* is in the game challenge itself, rather than in the speed and realism of its 3D graphics engine.

Like *Mercenary*, *Damocles* has a large chunk of adventure in it. There is no set way of stopping that comet. There are a number of ways of doing it – some easier than others – even one that enables you to prevent the collision seconds before it happens.

RELEASE BOX

ATARI ST	£24.95dk	IMMINENT
AMIGA	£24.95dk	IMMINENT
IBM PC	£TBA	SPRING

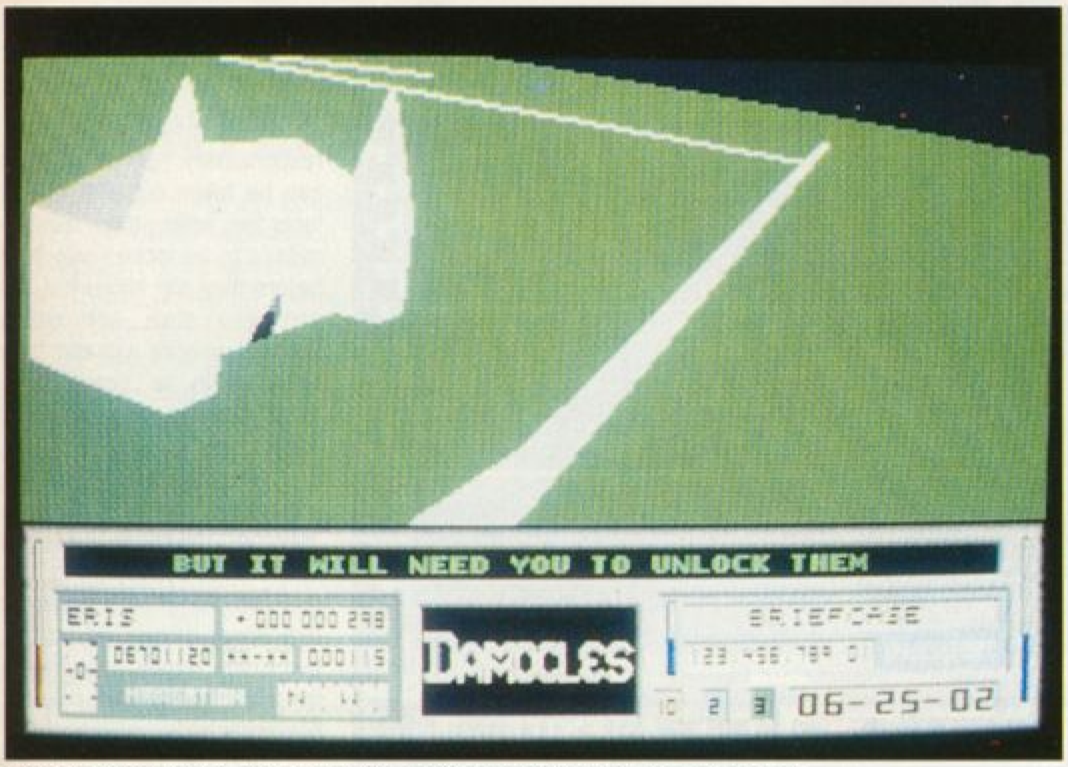
The similarity with *Mercenary* and with adventure games ends in the use of objects. There are dozens of these to found and examined on the nine planets and their 19 moons - and you will need to use a good deal of them if you to are to prevent the catastrophe on the beautiful watery planet of Eris.

When an object is picked up it appears in the Damocles window in the centre of the ship's control panel. Instructions on how to use it can also be brought up in this panel. To say too much about the combination of objects and how to use them would spoil the game – but as an illustration of the type of objects and there sophistication there is the camera. You can use this fully, taking remote control over it if you so desire. You may want to set up surveillance on one of the moons to watch the progress of the comet. This is possible with the video camera. You may even want to watch the catastrophe taking place if you have failed in you first attempt. This is easily done by placing a camera on a nearby planet, or one of Eris's moons.

It is also possible to take remote control of the ship if you wish to watch it performing a landing, firing its lasers at something, or simply flying into a sun set.

Exploration of the buildings is a large part of the gameplay. There are a lot more of these than in *Mercenary* and they are lot much bigger – many of them with lifts, stacks or corridors, windows and doors.

Some of the more notable buildings are the windmill (looks idyllic as its sails slowly turn against the back drop of the setting sun), parliament building, bars, shops and space centres. The really neat thing about the buildings is that you can peer out through them at


BUT IT WILL NEED YOU TO UNLOCK THEM

The Parliment building - where you will be briefed by the president.

any time and see the world just as you left it. If you park your ship out side the bar you can look at it from the the window. The relationships of objects to each other is always accurate – however much you manipulate these objects. It is this that makes for a totally believable world. A world that looks the same from whatever angle you explore it. The best illustration of this is the shop window. If you go inside the shop and place a table in the window you can then come outside of the shop and see that table exactly where you placed it. That may not sound like anything that marvellous – but when you consider that it is all happening in 3D, without any whirr of the disk drive, interruption of the screen action, and maintaining the positions of all the other objects on screen relative to the table and everything else in the picture, then you can understand that this is a gameplay system far more powerful than anything else like it. There isn't really anything like it in fact – save possibly *Darkside*, but this doesn't have the control over objects that is possible in *Damocles*.

Time is very important in *Damocles*. Not just because seconds are ticking away before the comet crashes into Eris, but because time travel, from planet to planet, and around individual planets, is all weighted against the real time that you have to achieve the mission.

Very little is given away at the beginning of the game. You have to discover the secrets and clues as you explore the planets and cities. The cities themselves have connecting road networks and there are land vehicles to use if you so desire. I preferred flying low over the roads, but race fans might fancy a bit of speeding along the alien roads.

To help you unravel the mystery of Damocles and stop that comet you have your old friend from *Mercenary* along with you – Benson, the 9th generation PC.

Benson communicates with you through a message panel on the ship control panel. He has stacks of wry observations, hints, clues and amusing asides – which help to lighten the slightly lonely, solo world of Damocles.

Damocles has everything – the thrill of discovery, the fun of exploration, a totally believable world, a tough challenge, and even the odd bit of blasting. It could well become an all time classic, up there in the Premier League with games like *Falcon*, *Carrier Command* and *Elite*.

● Eugene Lacey

INTERPHASE

Image Works dream of a game

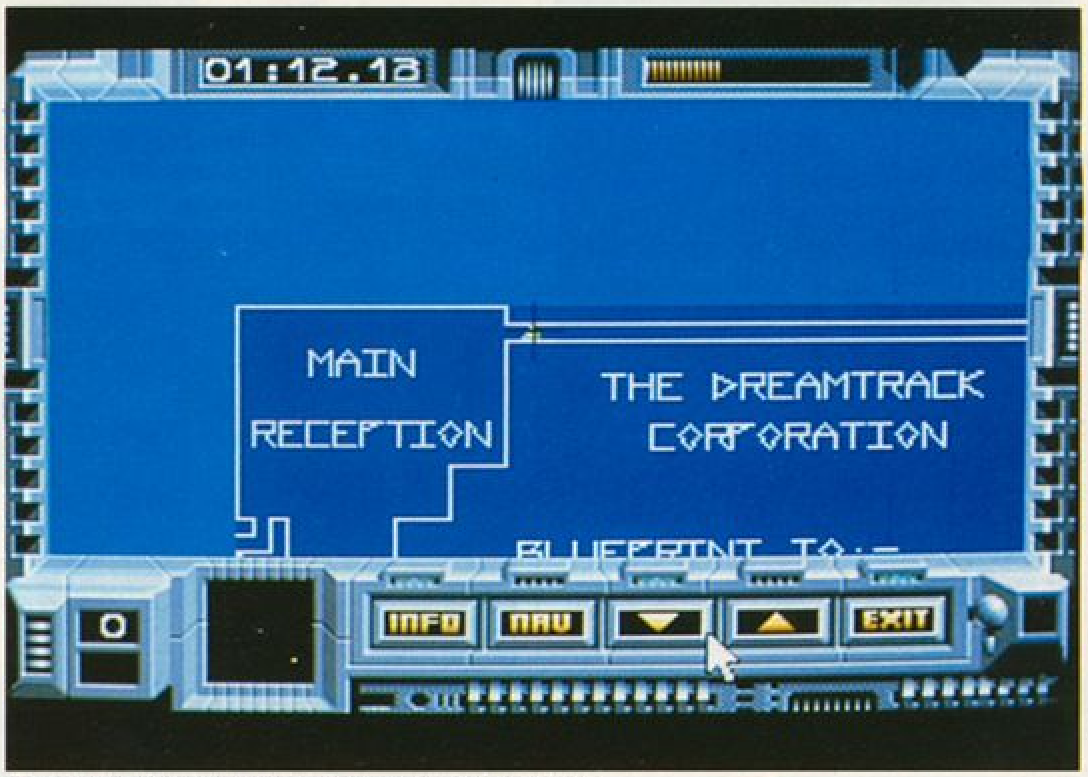
NEUROMANCER provided the inspiration for *Interphase*. The famous cyberpunk world of hi-tech dreams, created by the cult sci-fi novel, is what *Interphase* is all about.

The game supposes a world where the leisured classes have given up on computer games, grown tired of the latest theme parks, Acid house banquets and turned, instead, to the roller-coaster netherworld of the DreamTracks and Dream Recording.

The DreamTracks are the play missions of *Interphase*. Supposedly recorded by the big corporations of the future to keep the masses safely engaged in pointless leisure so that they can be more effectively exploited – it is down to you, Chadd, to get and destroy the MasterTrack to end this subliminal thought control.

What this impressive, if unoriginal, game scenario gives rise to is a 3D arcade adventure – a seek, blast, and explore challenge on the lines of *Star Glider II* or *Damocles*.

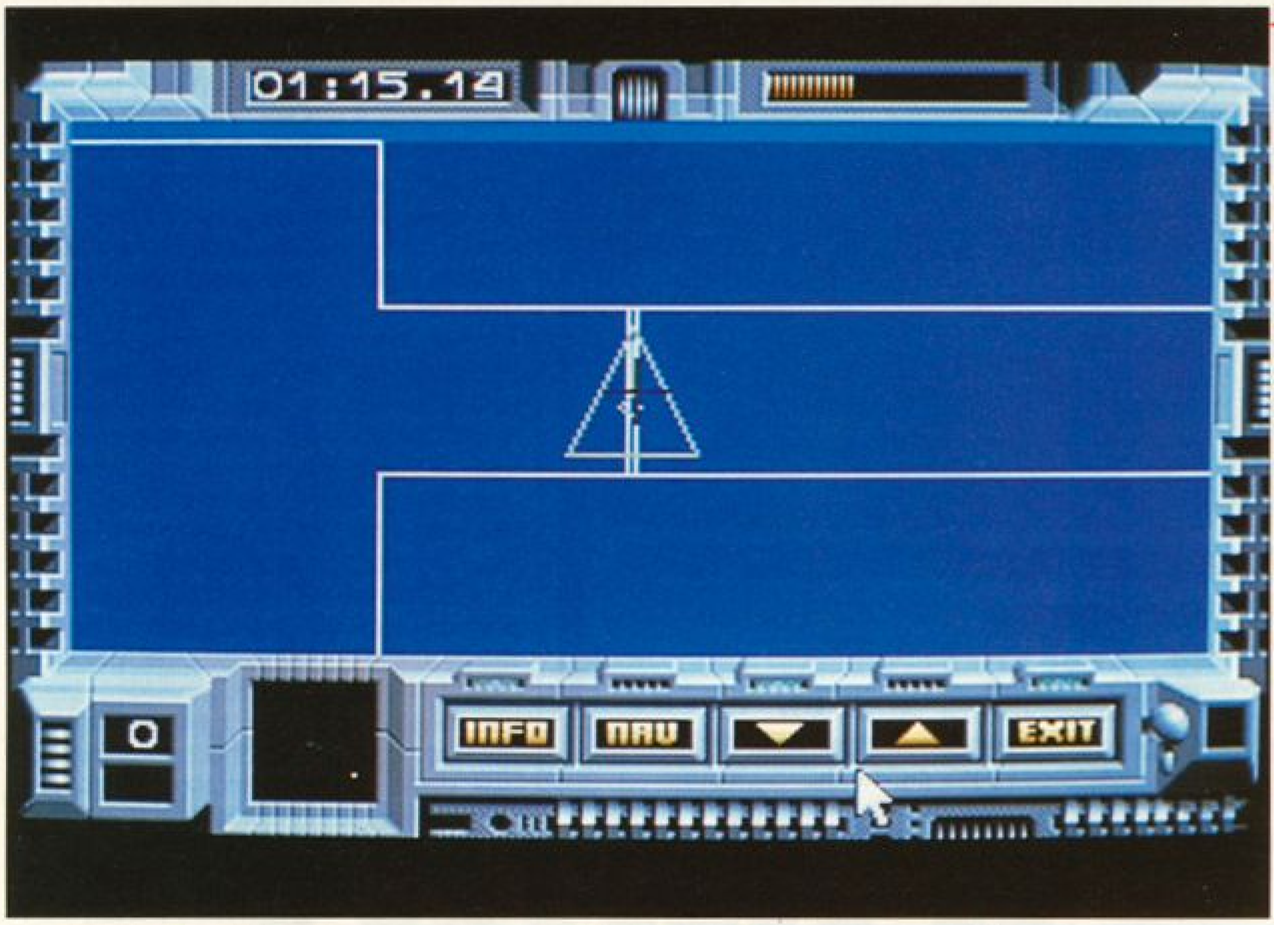
RELEASE BOX		
ATARI ST	£24.99dk	IMMINENT
AMIGA	£24.99dk	OUT NOW
IBM PC	£24.99dk	December



The blue print map of the Dreamtrack Complex.

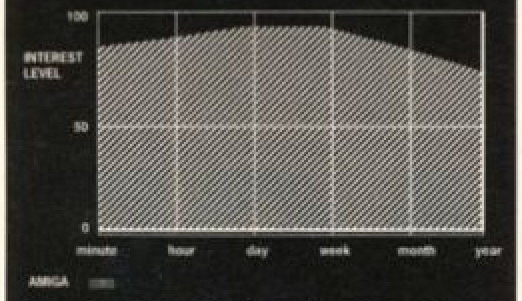
The advantage *Interphase* has over these two games is its ability to switch out of 3D mode into a 2D map and control screen – where you are given instructions and information on targets that you have to seek out and eliminate.

The map and information screens are a delight. You can zoom in and out of the blue



Zooming in on the blue print.

PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE



***Interphase* is tough. A good number of hours, saved games, and work on strategy will be needed to destroy the MasterTrack**

AMIGA VERSION

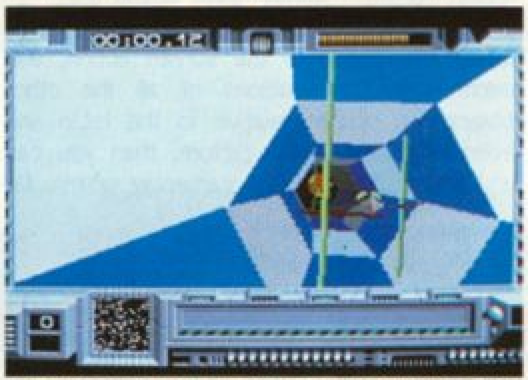
A great assortment of eerie buzzes, bleeps and hisses helps enhance the strange world of *Interphase*. The filled vector graphics work swiftly and smoothly and combine lots of detail with plenty of animation.

GRAPHICS	**9**	**IQ FACTOR**	**9**
AUDIO	**8**	**FUN FACTOR**	**8**

ACE RATING 915

print to look at certain objects within the dream track, such as a surveillance camera or a security door – click on the mouse for more information and you are given an animated 3D view of the object with a print out of information on that object. You need this information if you are to get anywhere in *Interphase*. The blue print screens also enable you to communicate with your girlfriend who has penetrated the the system, and is attempting to steal the control MasterTrack so that it can be destroyed.

Flight controls are implemented via the mouse and they do take a bit of getting used to. By pushing forward or back – and taking your finger on and off the mouse button – you can fly forward, backwards, accelerate, decelerate, bank left, right or stop. The feeling is very much of a flight-sim as you explore the innards of the DreamTrack computer system.



The tunnel screen. You must survive this to get into the Dream Track.

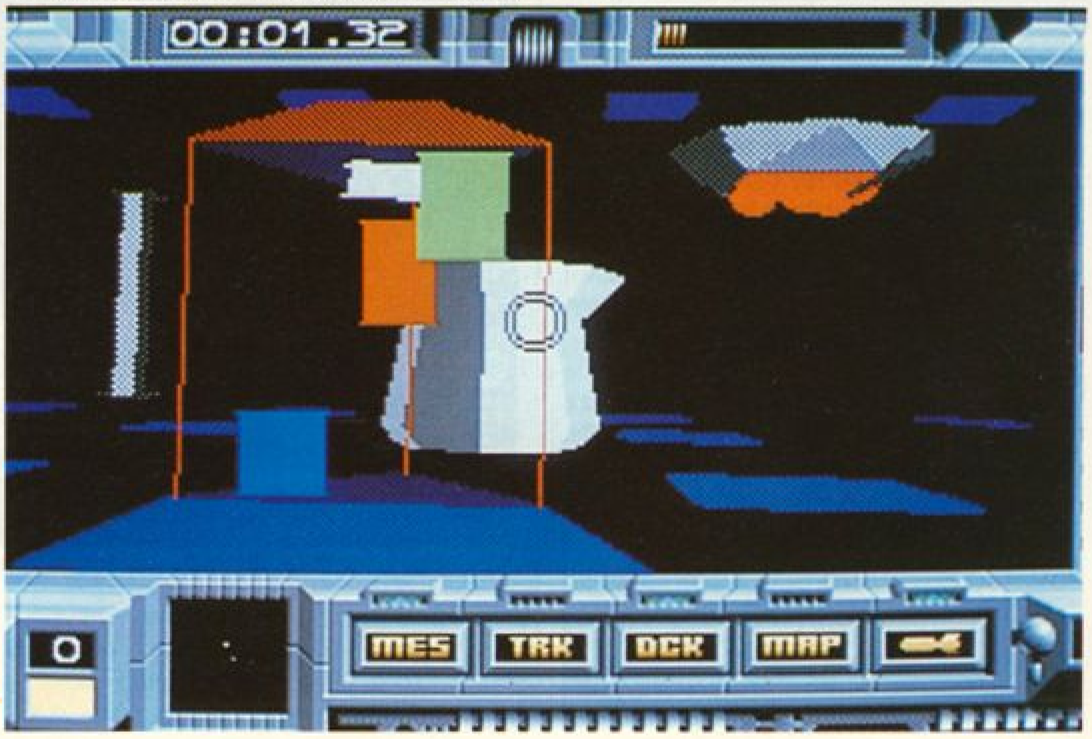
As well as all the cameras that you will have to take out of commission to give your partner room to manoeuvre there are also stacks of ground based and airborne defence craft operating in the computer. These are your responsibility. Some of them can be taken out with straight laser fire, while others require a missile to be locked onto them before they can eliminated. You can also dock with certain security devices and alter them from within or simply move them out the way with your tractor beam.

To help you find your way around the computer there is a 'Navcom' device to guide you to the object you need to work on. This works by a system of directional arrows as you fly, two green arrows appear when the item 'Navcomed' onto has been reached.

You can fail your mission by running out of energy, or if your partner is caught by a robot or steps onto a high voltage floor. It is therefore crucial to keep a constant check on the girl's progress and whereabouts using the blue print – so that you can protect her and clear the path for her, and guide her safely to the MasterTrack.

She is carrying a small transmitter which she can use to send messages, but you cannot communicate with her directly and of course, the DreamTrack computer will also be aware of any messages she sends out. It is therefore essential to become quick at carrying out manoeuvres. You have to constantly monitor what is going on and react to it if you are to succeed in your task.

The various objects that protect the DreamTrack computer are excellently drawn, and there is a good deal of fun to be had when you first get the game just following them around, lobbing missiles at them and working out what they are all for. Hardly anything is there just for show. There are Turntables for example at certain junctions that you can manipulate to guide your partner in the right direction, Cloning Plants constantly churning



A generator - use it to top up energy.

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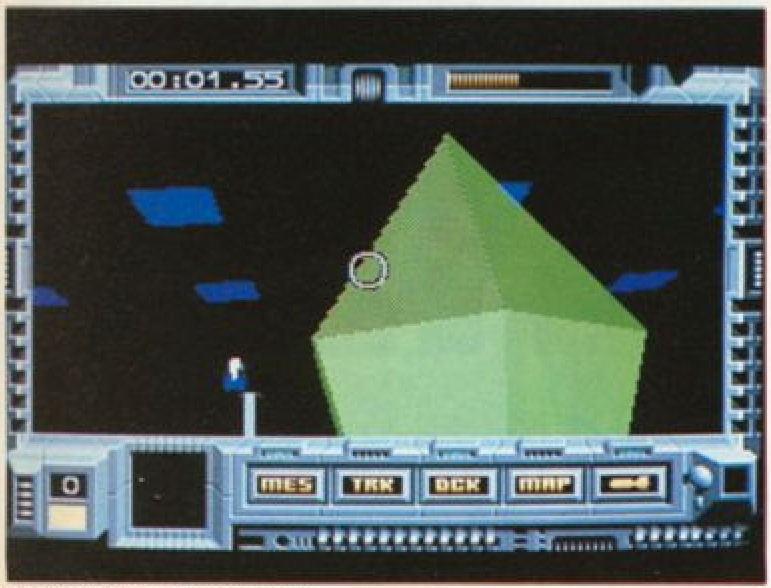
DAMOCLES VS INTERPHASE

Damocles and *Interphase* both feature some of the best 3D programming currently available in 16-bit games. They are the new standard, with *Starglider II* and *Interceptor* stepping down the pecking order. Both offer an absorbing strategic challenge, both will have rave reviews in just about every magazine you pick up, they cost the same and are both on the shelves of your local soft shop around about now. So which one do you spend money on? Most magazines will cop out on this question – raving about both of them, with the implicit suggestion that you should buy them both. This is of course a luxury that few of us could afford, so at ACE we will not conveniently avoid a comparison that so obviously needs to be made. We think *Damocles* is the better game for the following reasons. It is more open ended than *Interphase*. There is no set way of winning – indeed you can still play the game and derive a great deal of enjoyment from it even if you ignore the comet hurtling towards the planet Eris. It is packed with secrets that you will discover slowly, as you play it over a period of time. *Damocles* is also far easier to get into, but every bit as tough to beat as *Interphase*. The comparisons of the speed of the 3D techniques are not really relevant as both games achieve the highest possible standard in this department. *Damocles* may be slightly prettier, but this too, is a matter of pure taste. The main reason we put *Damocles* ahead of *Interphase* is because of the quality of the game design – more challenging, more absorbing and ultimately more rewarding.



Security door to next level.

out droids that it is sensible to close down, and energy sources that you need to locate to replenish your own supply.

What is particularly nice about the various structures and defence systems inside the DreamTrack computer is that almost everything has moving parts. The effect is of a factory in full production. The reality of most computers is the complete opposite of this of course, as they are in reality a static electronic world of circuits and chips, but the effect in *Interphase* is totally convincing despite this, a sort of surreal electronic world out of control – which fits exactly with the scenario of the game.

Interphase is a fast and furious challenge. You need to think quickly, and you get a genuine feeling that the computer you are competing against is thinking equally quickly.

Like *Damocles*, *Interphase* has had two years of intensive effort spent on it. Graphics are 'state of the art' 3D and the gameplay and plot have been thoroughly worked through to provide an entertaining, lasting challenge that is sure to stack up with *Xenon* and *Speedball* as one of Image Works best titles to date. Highly recommended to gamers who want all of the thrills of aerial combat with a cerebral element as well.

● Eugene Lacey

SOCCER MATCH
KENNY DALGLISH
FREE
WIN A TRIP TO ANFIELD
OUT IN OCTOBER
ON ATARI ST
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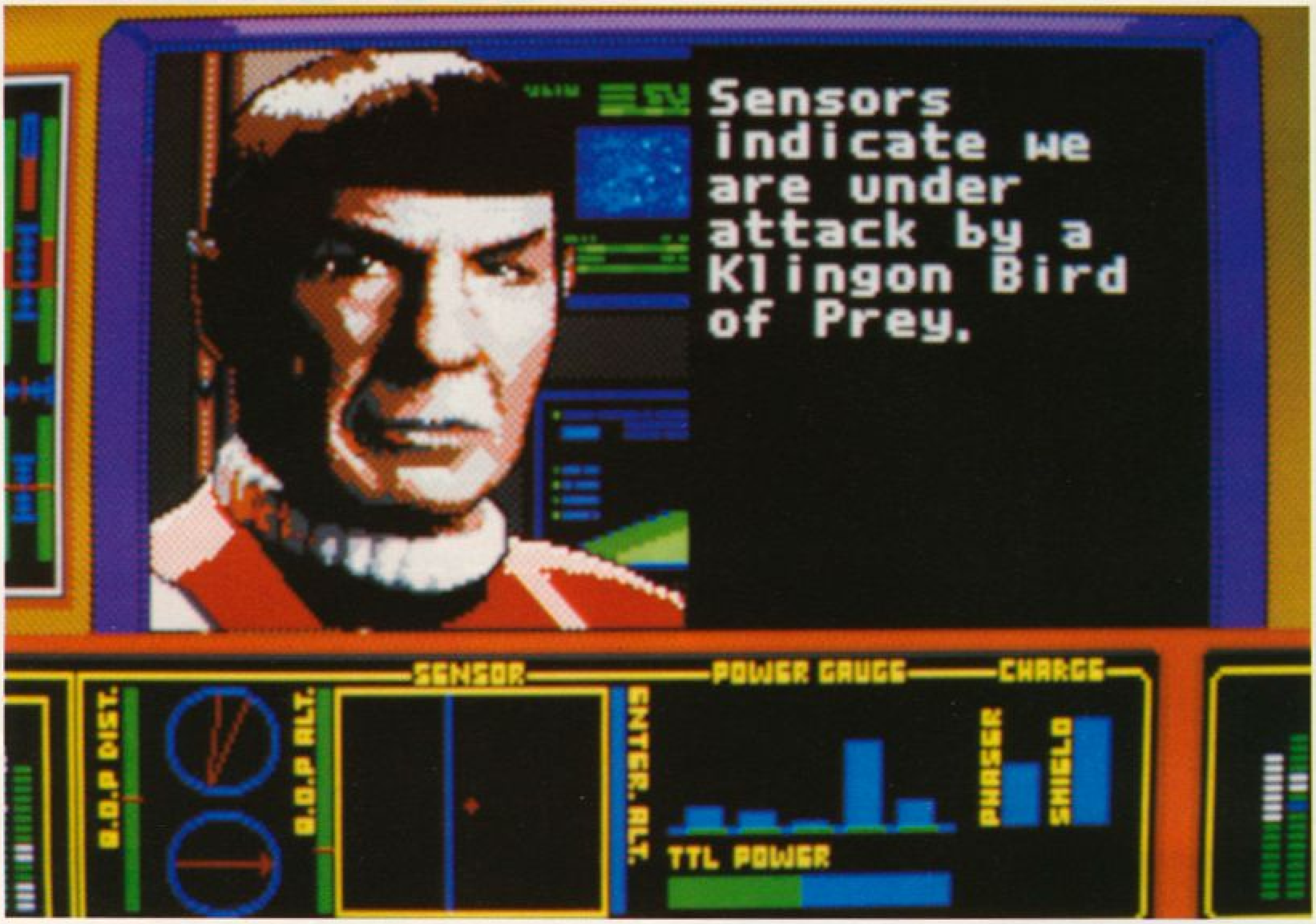
IMPRESSIONS



Sensors indicate we are under attack by a Klingon Bird of Prey.

STAR TREK V

MINDSCAPE boldly go where most softcos cock up...

STAR Trek has a chequered past as a computer game, which is odd when you consider how ideally suited the Trekky storyline is, and how much scope there is for building gameplay around the Starship Enterprise. Firebird were responsible for the biggest Trekky cock-up of all with a game that seemed to get lost in a black hole in mid-development – emerging about four years too late to universal indifference.

The good news is that Mindscape have finally unlocked the potential of Star Trek with this new game, launched at exactly the same time as Star Trek V goes on general release – uncharacteristically good timing for a new Star Trek computer game.

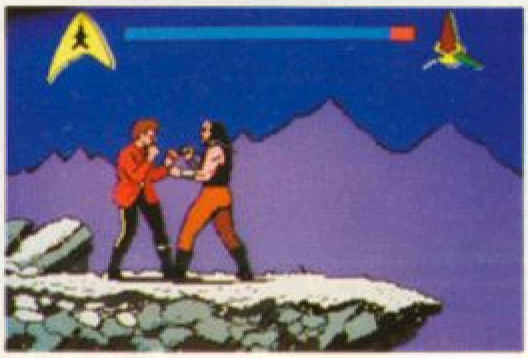
The game is based closely on the storyline of the film – the renegade Vulcan Skybok has taken command of the Enterprise and is steering her on a course through the Great Barrier to the centre of the galaxy. Battered, and low on energy, Enterprise is pursued by a Klingon Bird of Prey – closing at warp speed and loading its torpedoes.

As Captain T Kirk it is your mission from Starfleet to deliver three Ambassadors to a safe planet. Interacting with your crew – Scotty, Uhura and the redoubtable Spock – you have to take decisions quickly to complete the mission. Advanced control of the Enterprise is possible with a large, simulator-style manual explaining all of the systems at Captain Kirk's fingertips.

The key controls, requiring careful monitoring, are the weapons systems – Phasers, Photon Torpedoes, and Shield strength. The status of these is represented by bar graphs on the Enterprise main control panel. Each of these has its own targeting system – and this too, needs to be fully understood to deal with the various enemy ships that Enterprise will encounter in its adventure.

Various engineering displays and 'Power Available' reports can be checked to make certain of your exact status before taking an action and – if things look really bad – you can rely on Scotty or Spock to appear on the main display in person to point out any dangers or problems.

The first problem for Kirk to deal with is to manoeuvre safely the Enterprise through a 'worm hole' close to the great Barrier – with minimal energy available on board. This is

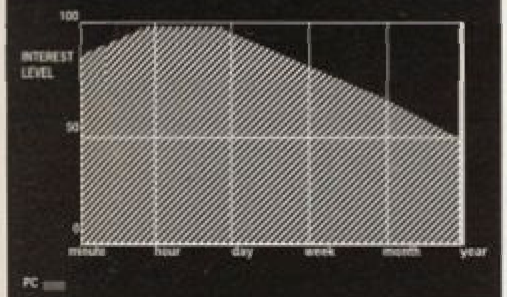


As you can see, the graphics on the PC version really do the game justice.

RELEASE BOX

ATARI ST	£24.99dk	EARLY '90
AMIGA	£24.99dk	EARLY '90
MAC	£34.99dk	IMMINENT
IBM PC	£34.99dk	IMMINENT

PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE



There is enough in it to keep you coming back for many a light year.

good practice in steering the ship – the 3D effect being created by a series of concentric circles emerging from the screen, swaying about all over the shop, causing serious damage to Enterprise should you collide with them.

It is not all bad news in the 'Worm Holes' though, as you might spot some Dilithium Crystals floating in the void which you can Tractor Beam aboard to replenish your energy supplies.

PC VERSION

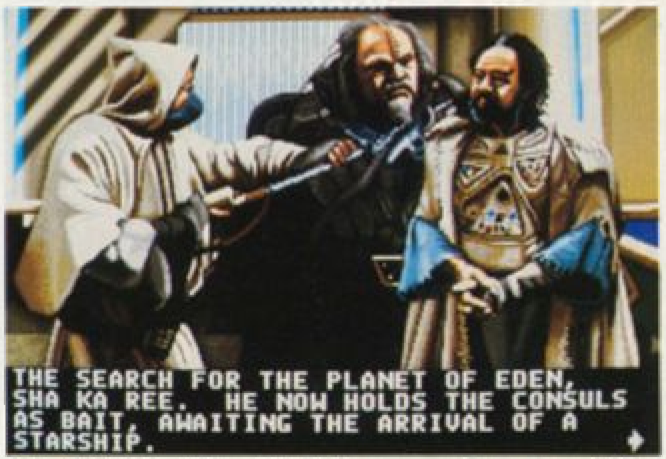
Graphics rival the Amiga and ST in VGA mode. Even EGA is pretty gasp-worthy. The gameplay is the thing, though – well thought-out to provide absorbing and challenging hours of fun. For this reason it should entertain on whatever system you have. A must for trekkies – and an entertaining space strategy/simulator for everyone else. The only let-down is the sound – but that's the PC for you.

GRAPHICS	**9**	**IQ FACTOR**	**7**
AUDIO	**4**	**FUN FACTOR**	**8**

ACE RATING 930

Not all of the action takes place aboard ship, which provides welcome relief from monitoring all of Enterprise's systems. You will in fact find yourself in hand-to-hand combat with the Klingon Commander Klaa, on the planet of Sha Ka Ree. Klaa is a tough adversary – one of the finest Klingon Commanders – but you must be careful not to kill him, capturing him instead and bringing him aboard the Enterprise to enjoy the "hospitality of the Starfleet".

The Klingon Bird of Prey is an awesome ship – far larger than the Enterprise and armed to the teeth. One of its trickiest manoeuvres is to lay a Gravatic-Planar Minefield around the Enterprise – requiring a careful use of Weapons, sensors, and Navigational controls to blow a hole in the GPM to escape. To practice some of the trickier manoeuvres required to beat the Klingon challenge a Mission Simulator is provided.

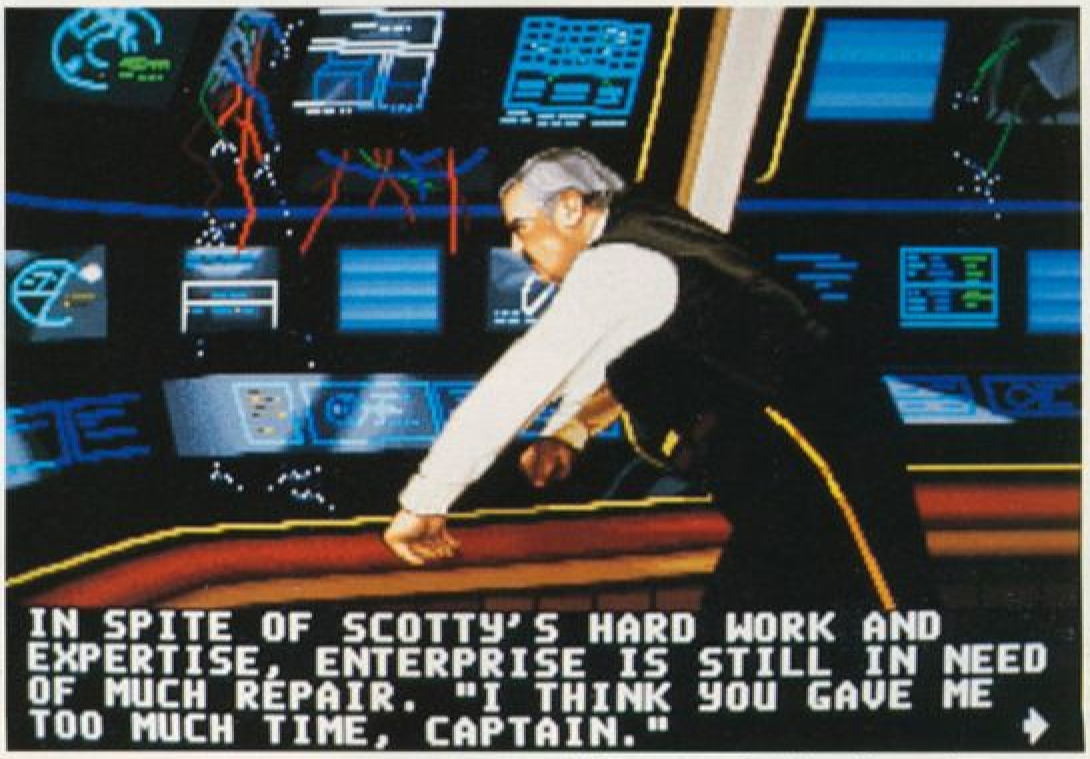


THE SEARCH FOR THE PLANET OF EDEN, SHA KA REE. HE NOW HOLDS THE CONSULS AS BAIT, AWAITING THE ARRIVAL OF A STARSHIP.

Star Trek V — The plot of the computer game of the movie begins to unfold in glorious technicolour (on EGA in this case).

One of the best aspects of *Star Trek V* is the feeling of command over the Enterprise that is created. This is something that the earlier interpretations failed to achieve. It is the faces of Uhura, Scotty, and Spock that make the crucial difference – as well as the number of orders you can issue. Scotty, for example, can be ordered to Stand By (Cease current activity and await further orders) Fire At Will, Arm or Disarm Phasers, Raise or Lower Shields, Arm Photon Torpedoes, Damage Controls (Effect immediate Repairs) or Repeat Last Statement.

A similar level of sophistication in commands is possible with other key staff. You really feel as though you were in charge, with the safety of the Universe resting on your shoulders.



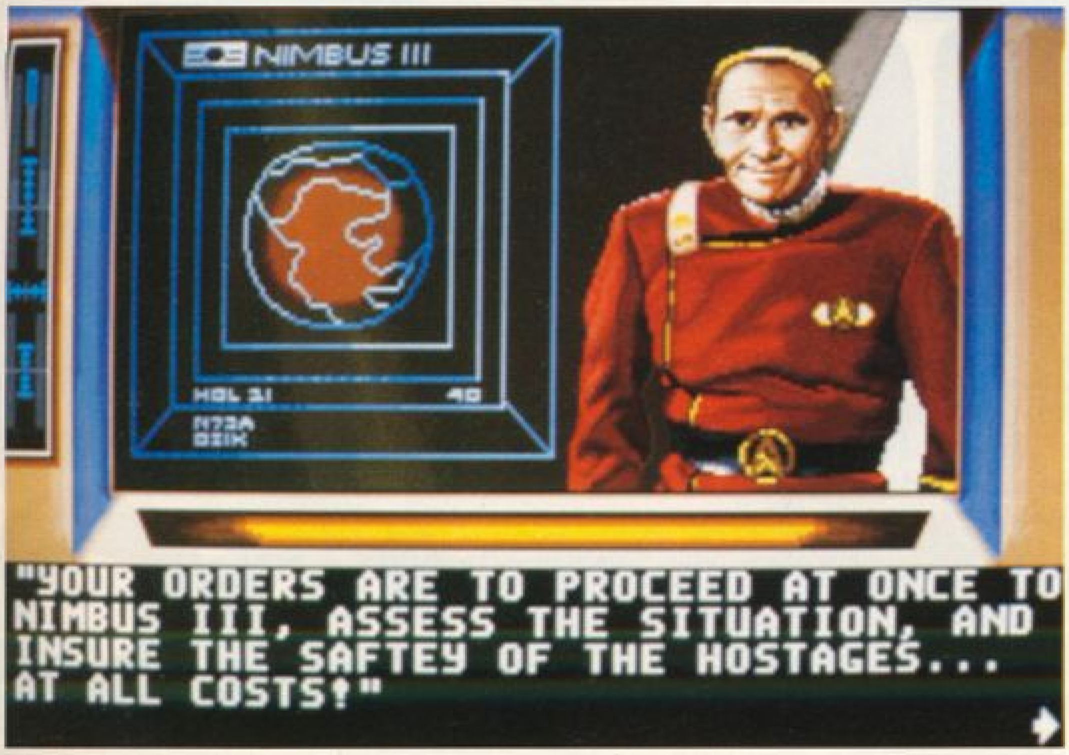
IN SPITE OF SCOTTY'S HARD WORK AND EXPERTISE, ENTERPRISE IS STILL IN NEED OF MUCH REPAIR. "I THINK YOU GAVE ME TOO MUCH TIME, CAPTAIN."

"It's noo good cap'n — the engines canny take any moor..." Classic Trekkie stuff as Scotty gets down to work.

Graphically *Star Trek V* is superb. From the rolling intro screen with its pretty static screens that set the scene – adventure style – right through to the animation in the game itself, a high standard is maintained.

The film may not have won major accolades from the film critics but that won't matter a jot to computer-owning Trekkies – as this is easily the best interpretation of Star Trek yet. Mindscape have successfully gone where plenty of other software houses have regretted going – and emerged without Klingon egg on their faces.

● Eugene Lacey



"YOUR ORDERS ARE TO PROCEED AT ONCE TO NIMBUS III, ASSESS THE SITUATION, AND INSURE THE SAFTEY OF THE HOSTAGES... AT ALL COSTS!"

'It's for yoohoo...' Yep, it's Star Fleet command on the line with your orders.

THE ULTIMATE

six exciting action sequences put you in control of Elliot Ness's elite squad of mafia-busters.

ALLEYWAY SHOOTOUTS

THE BORDER RAID

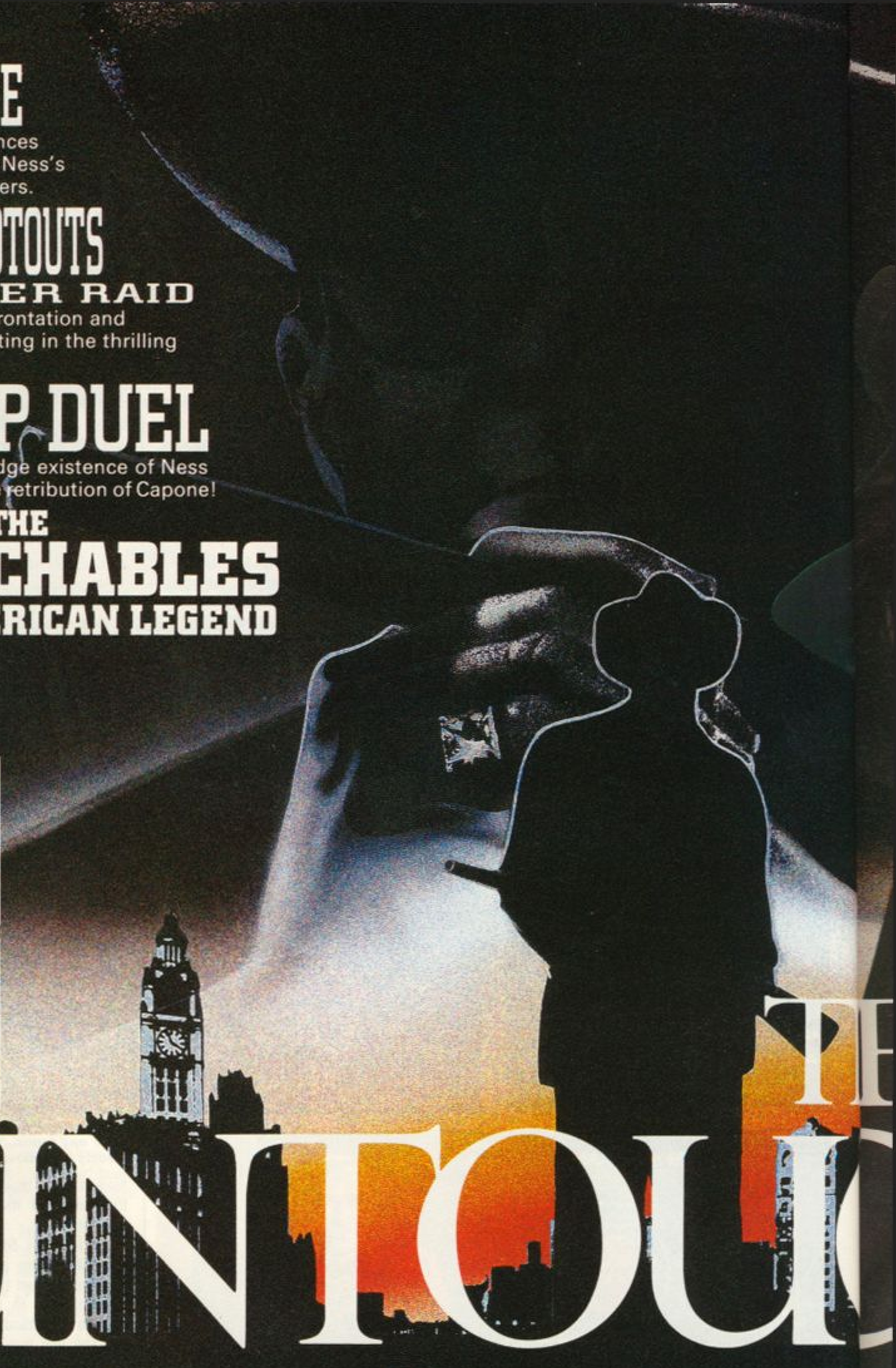
The Railway Station confrontation and Warehouse bust culminating in the thrilling denouement of a

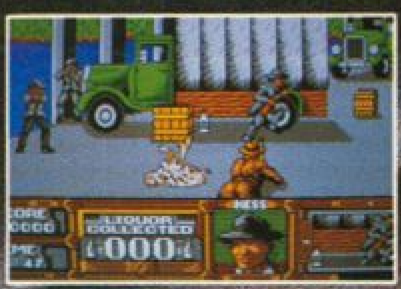
ROOFTOP DUEL

as you re-live the knife edge existence of Ness in his struggle against the retribution of Capone!

THE UNTOUCHABLES

LIVE AN AMERICAN LEGEND

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"a fine example of how to do the job properly ... a cracking conversion ... easily one of the most successful licences to date"
Sinclair User

"an absolute corker of a game ... as smooth and polished as you can get, animation is top notch ... a brilliant film conversion"
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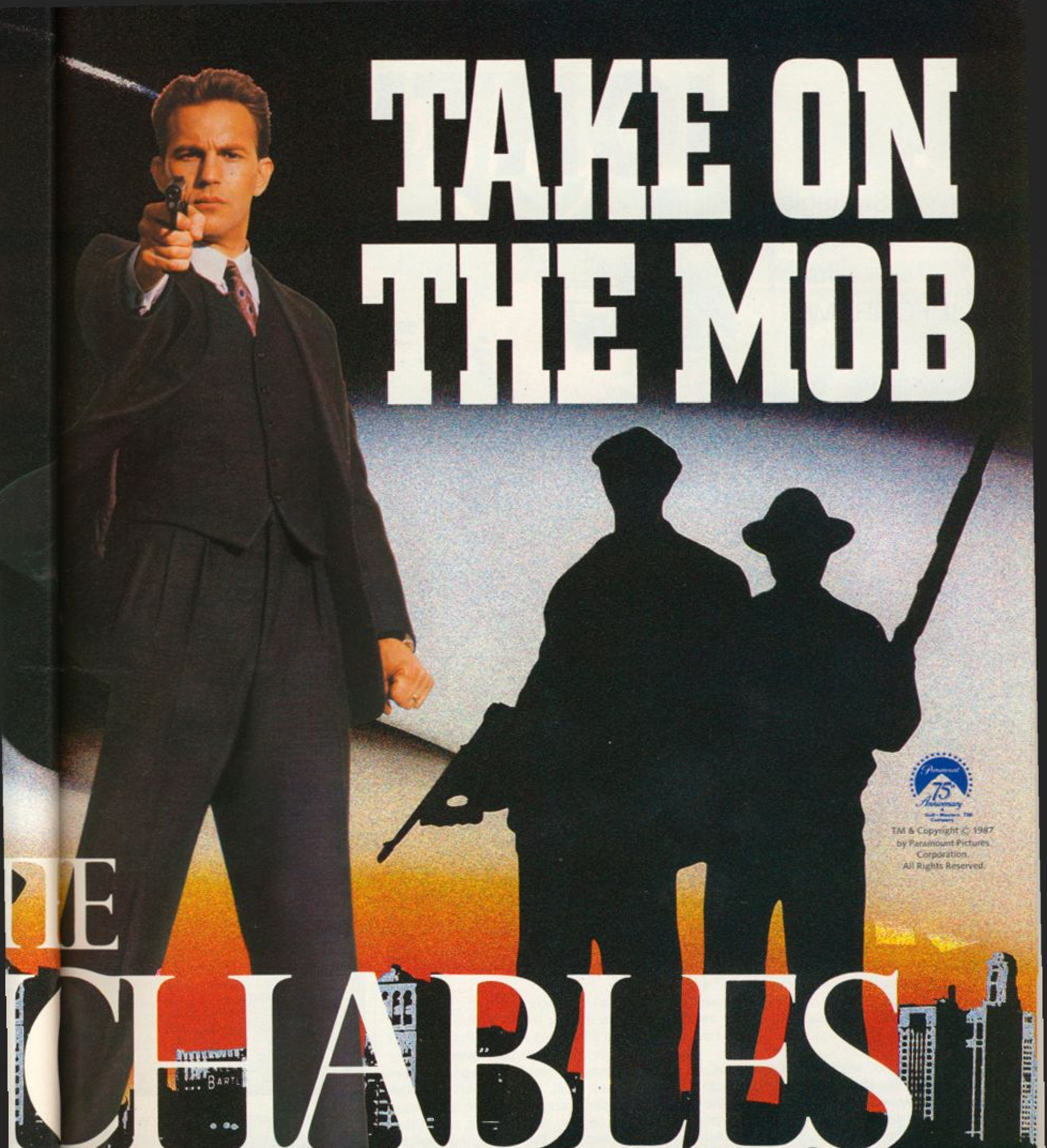
TAKE ON
THE MOB
…HE
…CHABLES
BARTL

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machine
TOP SCORE
GOLD MEDAL AWARD

"Apart from the sheer thought apparent in the game design, there are the superb graphics"
Games Machine

"the film was great … the game is even better. Great atmosphere … the music is brilliant … a spectacular combat game, an unbelievable package … and utterly superb game."
Zzap

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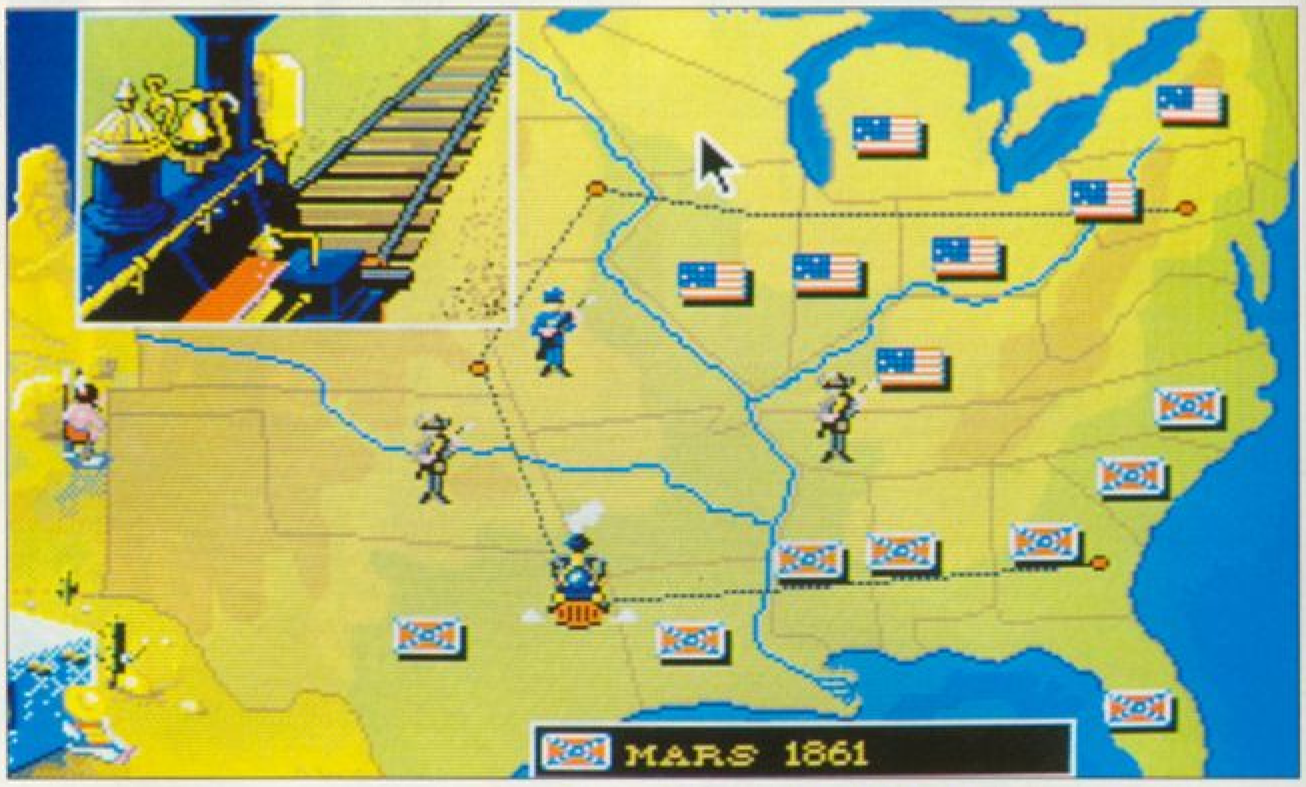
NORTH & SOUTH

Strategic ooh-la-la from INFOGRAMES



BASED on a series of Belgian comic books entitled Les Tuniques Bleues, North And South is an interpretation of the American Civil War. The choice to play either Yankees or Confederates is yours, with the battle taking place during one of the four years of the war at one of three levels of difficulty.

However it becomes obvious from the outset that this isn't a run-of-the-mill hexagons and squares affair... A wildly animated ghost rider in the sky bugles the title tune, and being able to `tickle' the option screen photographer's buttocks with your pointer for a `laugh' is indicative of the general nature of the game. In translating the comic to computer, Infogrames has managed to capture the humour - and thrown in an extra mirth-making feature for good measure... namely an abundance of guffaw-inducing sound effects.

Troop movement and most of the strategic decisions take place on a single screen map of relevant American states, with the objective of removing the opposition from sight. Your priority is to occupy enough territory to establish a rail supply line and subsequently fill your safe and in turn buy new troops. Occupation of territory inhabited by enemy troops means war. A brief animated sequence of one side firing a shot into the ranks of the other is shown and the fighting commences...

Gun-toting foot soldiers, sword-bearing cavalry (complete with bugle tune) and cannons are at your disposal, with control of each transferred when appropriate. Boulders, trees, canyons and rivers disturb troop formations, but can also be used to an advantage. Out of all the North And South's arcade games, the battle sequence is the most amusing - which is fortunate as it's played the most often.

Less interesting though is the horizontally scrolling race to capture a fort when you invade a state occupied by an enemy flag. A rendition of Yankee Doodle plays as you run, with each note corresponding to your footsteps. Avoiding obstacles and explosives and punching soldiers is the order of the day, with a time limit represented by a `boinging' boot (you) against the clock (tick tock). The process of hijacking an enemy train after occupying an area containing a supply line is much the same, only you perform death-defying leaps from carriage to carriage in an attempt to reach the engine.

Now all this sounds like gallons of fun - and it is. At least it is until the jokes stop being funny and it becomes apparent that there's not much room for strategic play - even when playing an strategic game (the arcade sequences are played for you). The three levels of computer controlled opponent represent a challenge, sure, but certainly not in the long term. Catastrophes (such as the Indians and Mexicans occasionally taking offence to military presence), storms (freezes troop movement for a month) and supply ships to replenish ailing forces are all very well, but none of these aspects makes up for the small play area and limited gameplay.

North And Sound is rich in visual and aural quality. A comic-book feel is prevalent throughout, with select scenes appearing in panels. But there's just not enough flexibility for gameplay - playing area limited

● Brian Nesbitt

RELEASE BOX

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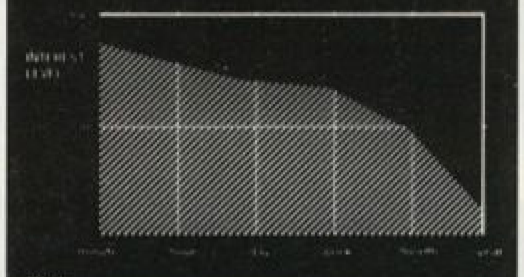
AMIGA VERSION

Exquisite presentation generates a suitable comic-book feel throughout. Stylish visuals combined with plenty of suitable sounds and jingles provide a treat for the eyes and ears, but this is inadequate compensation for the gameplay limitations. *The two player head-to-head option saves the day... just.*

GRAPHICS	9	**IQ FACTOR**	8
AUDIO	9	**FUN FACTOR**	8

ACE RATING 721

PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE



Limited play area restricts lasting interest of an otherwise slick, black-humoured wargame.

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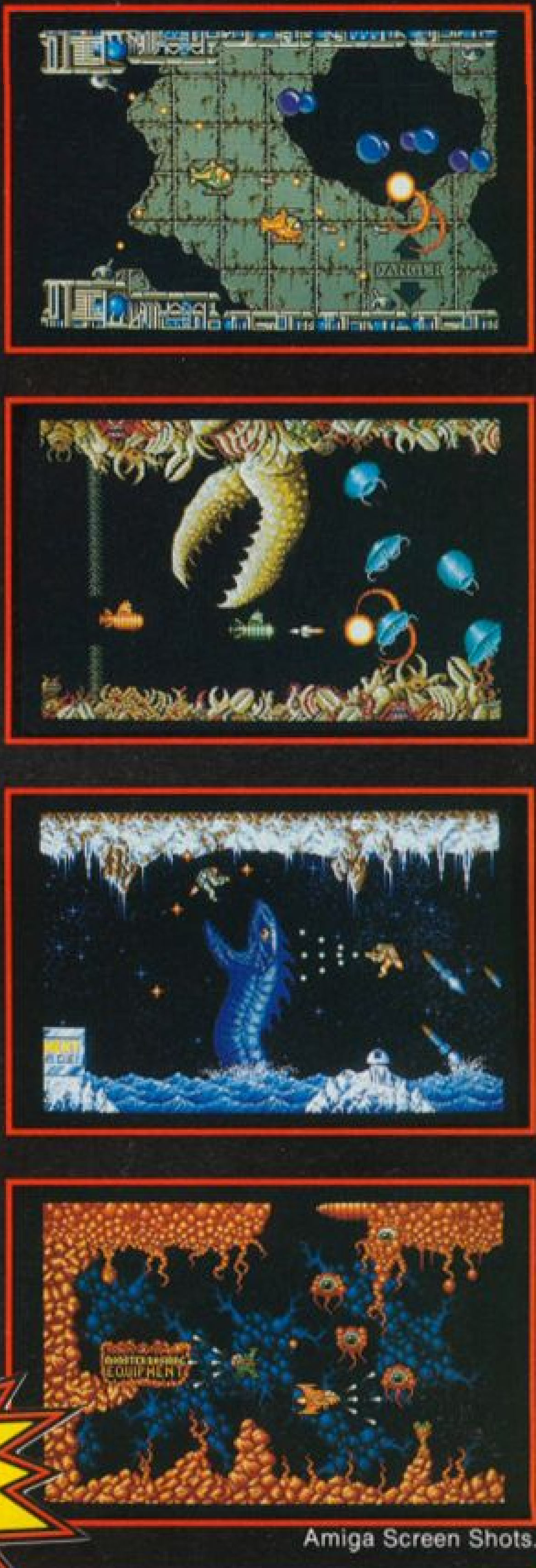

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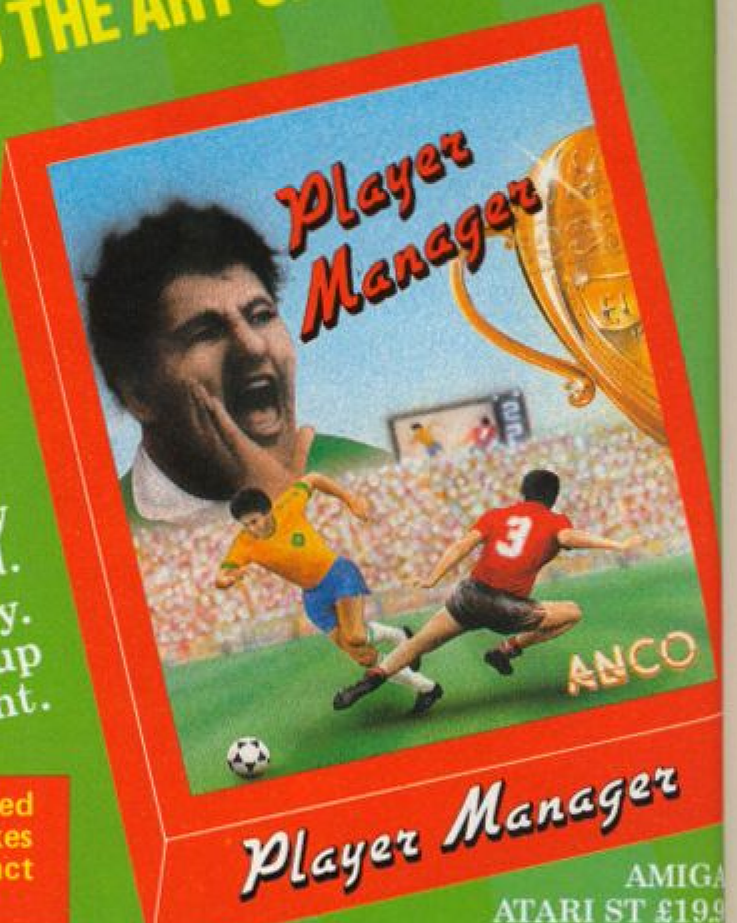

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Bring Back The Glory Days, the brief of the newly appointed PLAYER MANAGER, an International class player, as he takes charge of a third division club. His success depends on four distinct aspects of the game.

PLAYING SKILLS OF THE MANAGER

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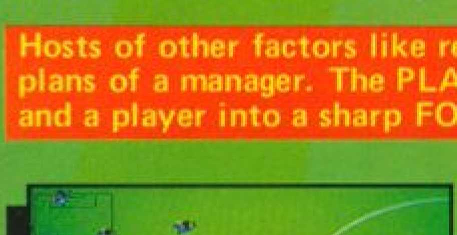

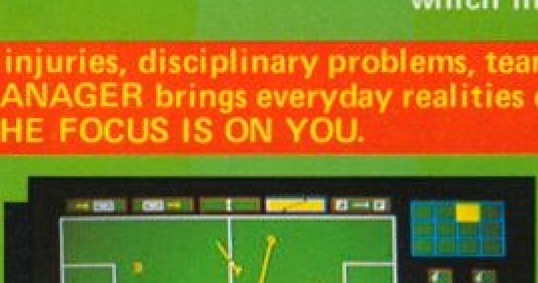

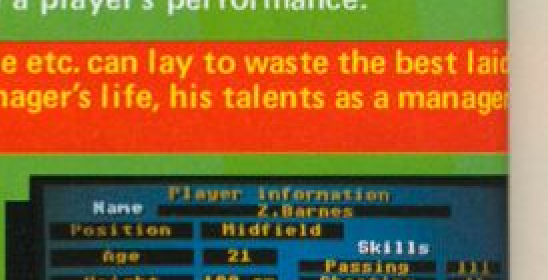

Player Information

Name	Z.Barnes			
Position	Midfield		Skills	
Age	21		Passing	111
Height	180 cm		Shooting	41
Weight	81 Kg		Tackling	60
Pace	101		Keeping	23
Dexterity	106		Morale	100

History

	This yr.	Last yr.
Injuries	2	1
Bans	0	1
Goals	2	4
Matches	10	10

Stamina	120
Resilience	149
Temperament	143
Work rate	84

Int	1st	2nd	3rd	4th
0	0	0	1	1

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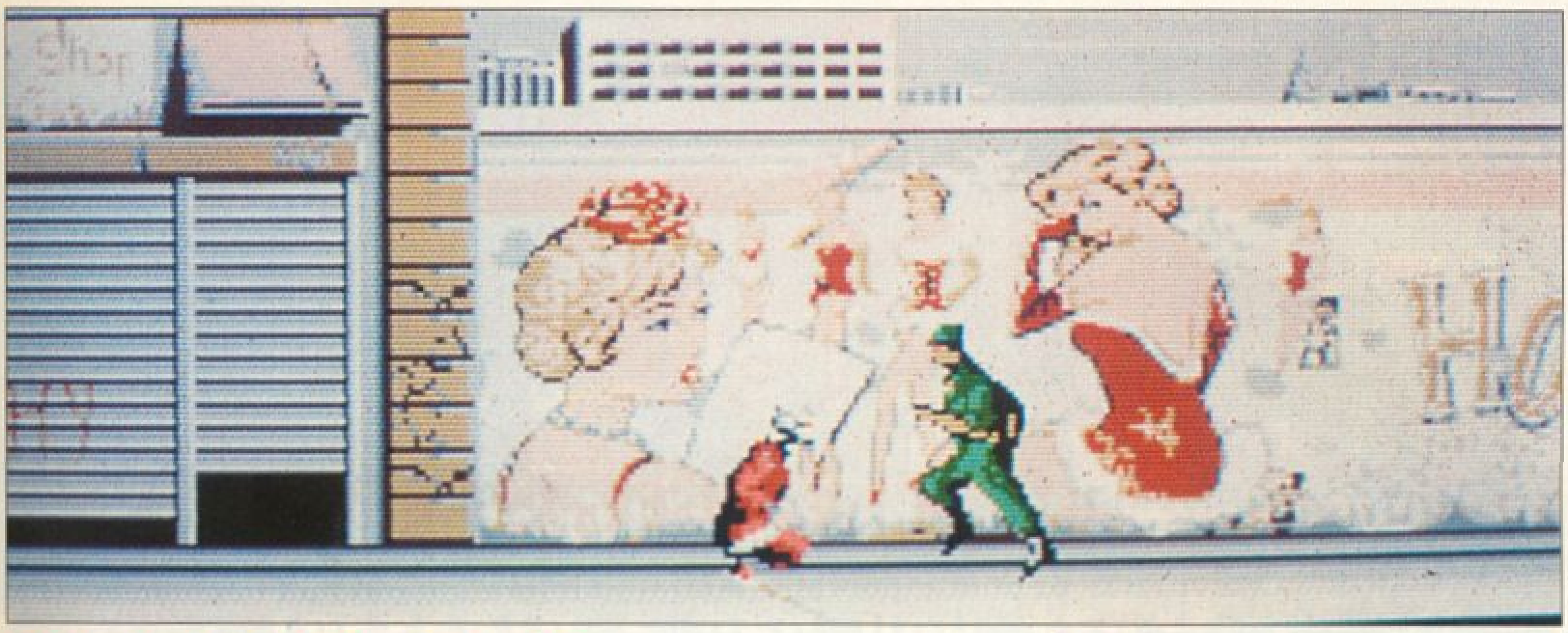


NINJA WARRIORS

VIRGIN try some metallic espionage...

WHEN I mention the name *Ninja Warriors* to you, your first reaction is bound to be 'Oh , wasn't that the scrolling beat-em-up coin-op that used a three screen system similar to *Darius?*'. No? Ah well, *Ninja Warriors* isn't exactly in every arcade across the globe. But a coin-op it was, and a conversion this is.

The world is, as usual, in distress. An evil dictatorship has, as usual, overthrown the system, and everywhere, as usual, lies peril. The country's only chance is to somehow kill the dictator, but – as usual – no-one wants to draw the short straw. All the bravest men in the land lie either slain by one of the dictator's foul mutated creatures or cowering in fear. Who can save us now?

The immortal robotic Ninja Warriors, that's who. Nobody knows how they came about, or what their real purpose is, but one thing's for sure, they're the only one's who can save the day.

As a game, *Ninja Warriors* is pretty simple. You are one of the robotic warriors, at first armed with a limited supply of shuriken, who has to travel from left to right across six l-o-n-g scrolling levels before you reach the boss, whose throat you have to slit. Along the way you come across loads of different enemies, including hunchbacks who pack a mean punch, fire breathers with the power to disappear and appear at will and a massive sherman tank, to name but a few.

The graphics are arcade perfect, and for a game of this size, that took some clever programming (see box).

As a beat-em-up, it's great. There's lots of variety both in the backdrops and enemies, so it takes a while to get bored, and it's learnable, menaing you can get a little further every time.

A fine arcade version from the people that brought you *Silkworm* and *Continental Circus*. I can't wait to see *St. Dragon*.

● Tony Dillon

ST VERSION

Perfect coin op graphics, complete with a great soundtrack make an attractive game, and that linked with the fun you'll have playing it makes it a sure winner.

GRAPHICS	9	**IQ FACTOR**	4
AUDIO	7	**FUN FACTOR**	8

ACE RATING 830

C64 VERSION

The graphics and sound aren't as hot as the ST, naturally, and the disk multiload system has been dropped. Still a great looking game and a lot of fun to play...

GRAPHICS	7	**IQ FACTOR**	4
AUDIO	6	**FUN FACTOR**	7

ACE RATING 825

RELEASE BOX

ATARI ST	£19.99dk	December 7th
AMIGA	£19.99dk	December 7th
SPECTRUM	£9.99cs • £14.99dk	December 7th
AMSTRAD	£9.99cs • £14.99dk	December 7th
C64/128	£9.99cs • £14.99dk	December 7th

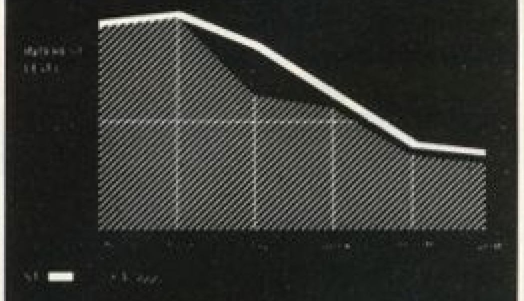
CODING CHALLENGE

Sales Curve, being the perfectionists they are, were hit with a pretty tough obstacle when they started to program the graphics for *Ninja Warriors*. There were too many of them. The backdrop, for example, never repeats, so they couldn't block it out like you can with most games, and to just place it in resident memory took too much memory, so this is what they did. By using a clever form of diskloader, the game can load in areas of backdrops and enemy sprites as it needs them, essentially making the disk drive a limited access ROM.

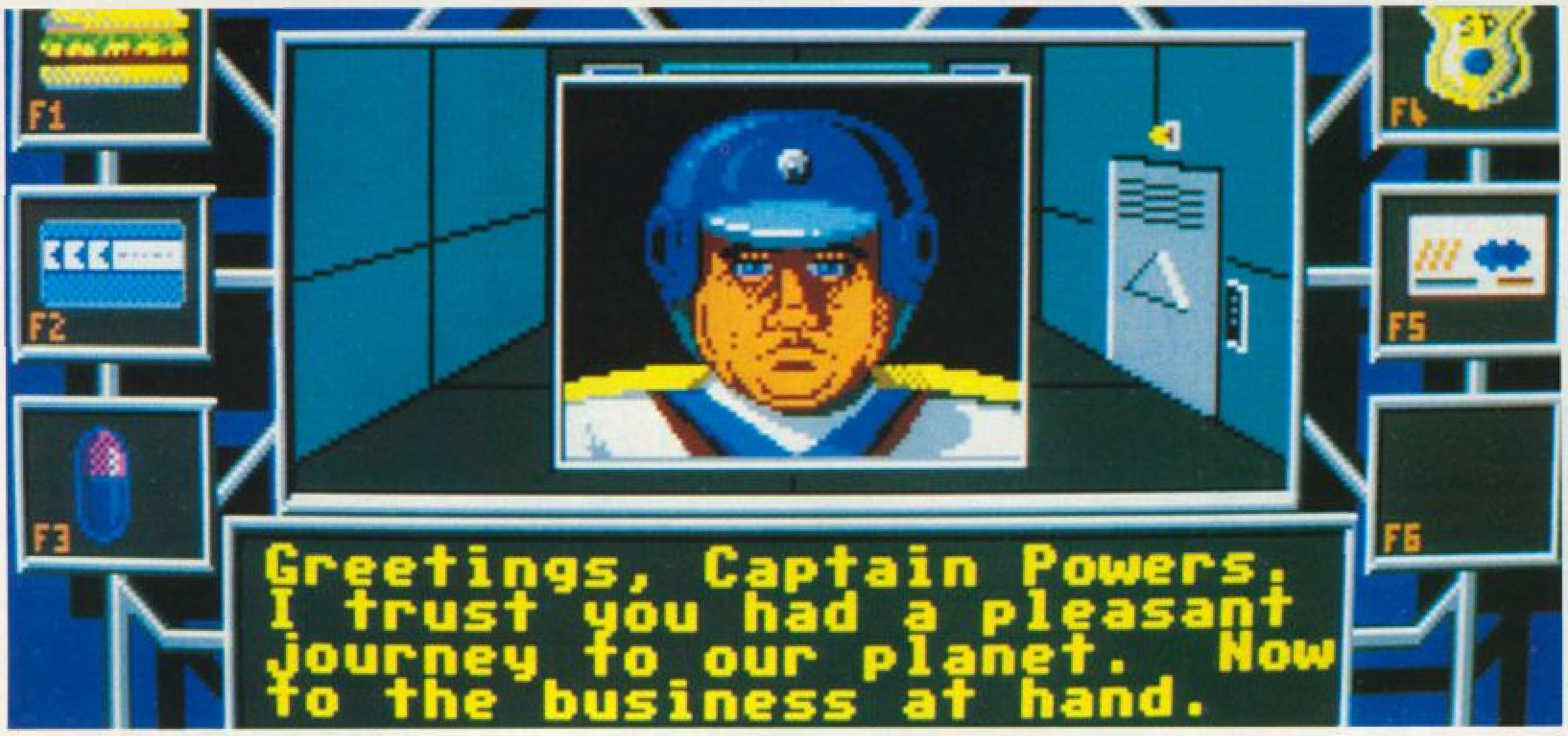
'We have used a similar method before on *Silkworm*', explains Dan Marchant from Sales Curve, 'On the Amiga version, the game actually loads in the end sequence as you are flying through the last level. Of course, *Ninja Warriors* is a much improved version of that, and *St. Dragon* will be a much more improved version.'

With so much extra graphic memory, Sales Curve have not only been able to take all the backdrops directly form the coin-op and scale them down to Amiga/ST resolution, they;ve also been able to take all the sprites, complete with all frames of animation intact, a feat never before accomplished. What you end up with is a coin-op quality looking game.

PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE



The graphics of the ST version, plus the slightly lower difficulty level makes it just a touch longer lasting than the 64 incarnation.



Greetings, Captain Powers.
I trust you had a pleasant
journey to our planet. Now
to the business at hand.

OMNICRON CONSPIRACY

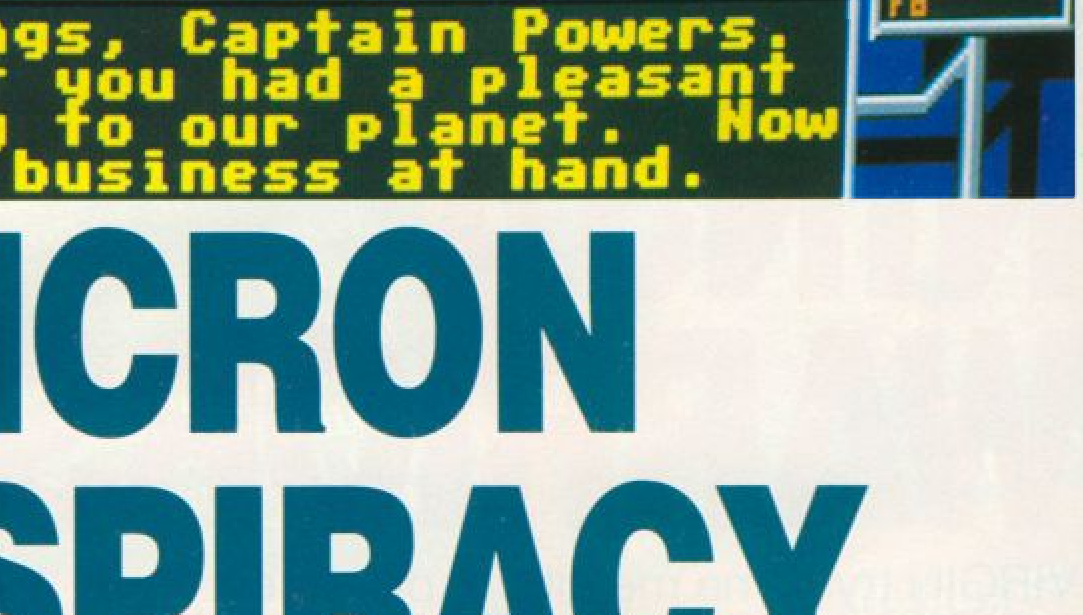
IMAGEWORKS conspire to bring US humour to British adventurers...

THERE seems to be a trend in the states at the moment for zany adult adventures in which the emphasis is clearly on light-hearted gameplay and off-beat humour. Sierra On-line have probably explored this genre to a greater extent than most development teams, with titles like *Leisure Suit Larry*.

Now First Star Software have made a contribution with *Omnicron Conspiracy*. You take on the persona of Ace Powers, a star police captain who has been assigned the task of investigating an inter-galactic drug ring. You begin aboard your ship, where your PAL (Personal Automatic Link) informs you that your presence is desired on Cron by the planet's chief of police.

After arriving at Cron you are escorted by the rather short-tempered Lieutenant Drek to the hyper-lift which takes you to the Chief's office. Once there you are given the bad news. The previous agent investigating the evil drugs ring has gone missing. You must pick up the trail and bust the dealers. From here on in it's up to you to follow up all the clues that are liberally strewn in your path.

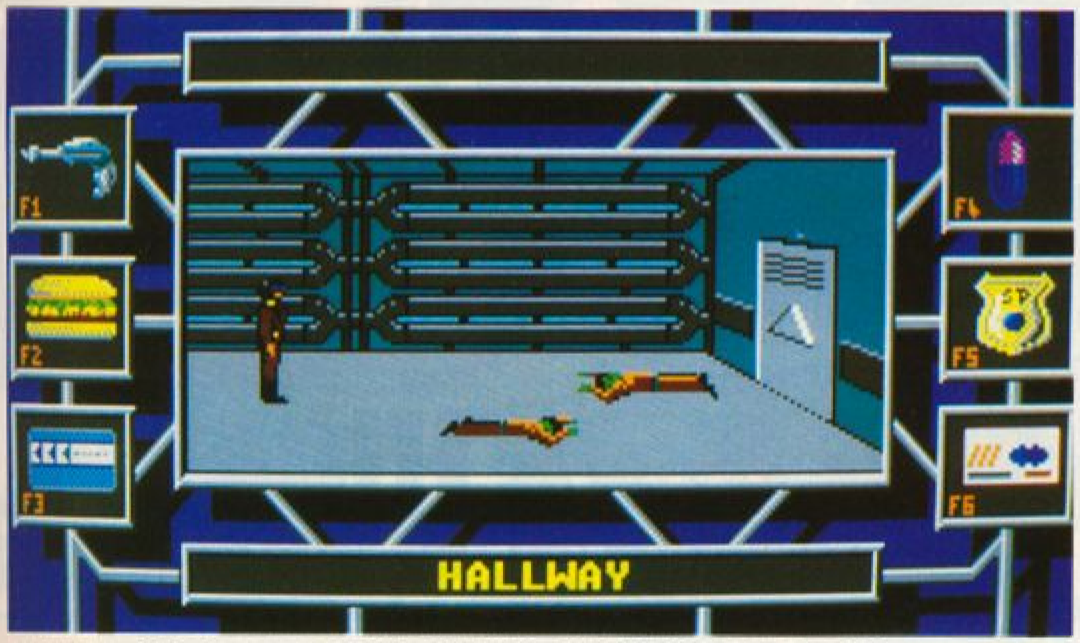
Like the Sierra adventures, *Omnicron Conspiracy* is fully animated. Movement is achieved by using either joystick or keyboard to get your character from room to room. Unlike Sierra's stuff, however, there is no text entry – all decisions are made by selecting options from a menu. Move into an object or character, press Enter, and a menu appears with two or three possible courses of action, which change depending on your situation. One of the most useful options is CONVERSE, which allows you to glean useful titbits from anyone you might encounter. You have six pockets which can be used for storing collected items, although your ALSWELL (Automatic Laser System with Energy Light Load) should permanently occupy one of these if you want to last long. Activating any of the six pockets again calls up a menu of options.



Ace stands on the bridge of the Falcon with his trust P.A.L. and his plasma cannon tucked safely away in his trousers.

Finding uses for most of the objects is not too difficult. There are also one or two in there that are just for fun. Try popping into the CD shop on Cron and inserting a disk into the CD player. By far the most useful item is your Alswell. This can be set to either stun or kill (just like the old Star Trek phasers).

Eliminating other characters is simply a matter of facing them and hitting the space bar and they are instantly frazzled. Of course there is also the great danger that you will meet with much the same treatment. I was most affront-



Ugh! Lots of dead green men in the hallway... must've been some party!

ed when, on wandering into a bar, I was accosted by some ugly green guy whose idea of a friendly greeting was a few laser shots to the belly. Fortunately, if such a disaster should occur, your P.A.L. droid can beam you back to the ship and have you reassembled by the Nurse droid. Following a successful reassembly, I marched straight back to the bar and fried the pig before he could get a word in edgeways. Very satisfying indeed!

You should actually find yourself solving the first part of the game quite easily, but the drugs bust is only the tip of the iceberg. There are, in fact, two further mysteries to be solved before you have properly completed the game.

I quite liked *Omnicron Conspiracy*. The very American humour does grate from time to time, but on the whole the game is good fun. The graphical interface that has been used in favour of text entry is going to make the game accessible to the sort of people who otherwise wouldn't touch it with a barge pole. The graphics and animation actually have a slight edge on the Sierra games, although the sound is severely restricted. This is certainly not going to be everybody's cup of tea, but if you're not turned off by software that has a very American feel to it, then it should be worth a look.

● Laurence Scotford

PC VERSION

The animation and graphics have a lot of character and give the game a very off-beat feel. Sound is fairly limited, as we've come to accept from PC games. It plays well though and should appeal to more people than a lot of adventures.

GRAPHICS	8	**IQ FACTOR**	8
AUDIO	5	**FUN FACTOR**	8

ACE RATING 780

RELEASE BOX

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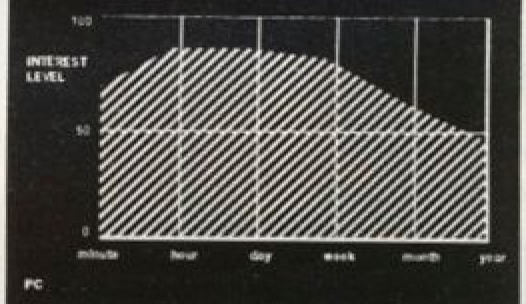

Should provide reasonably challenging entertainment for some time.

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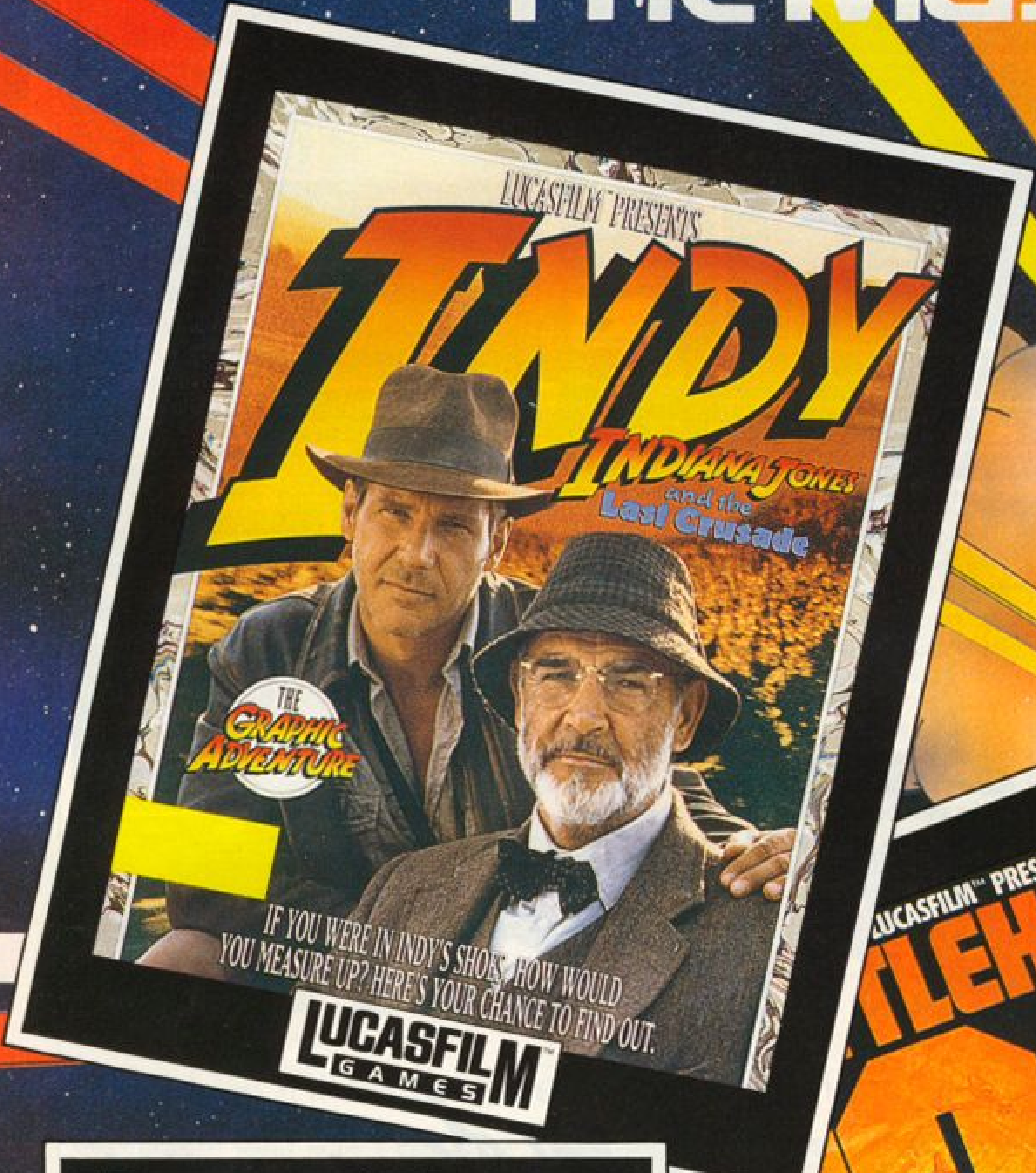
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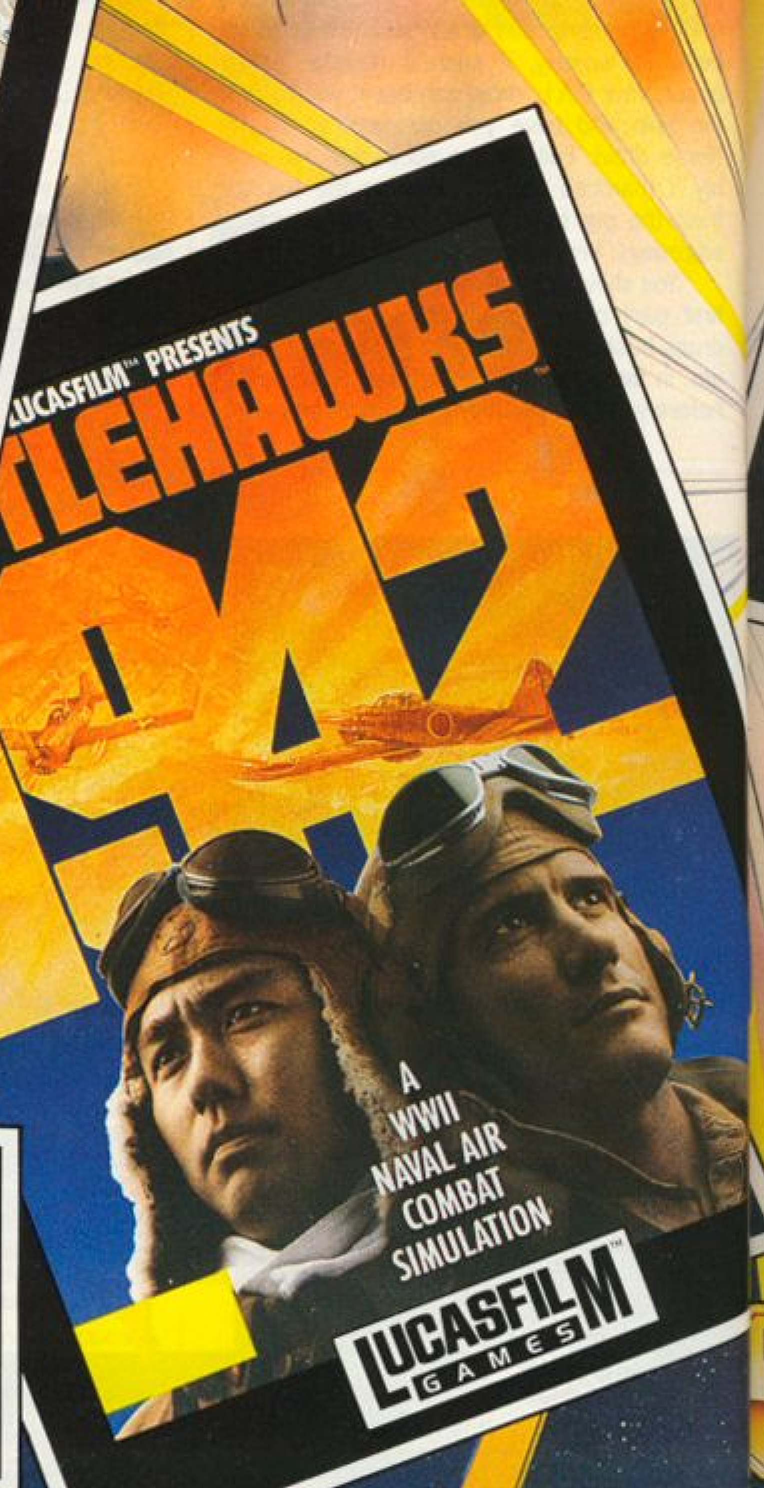
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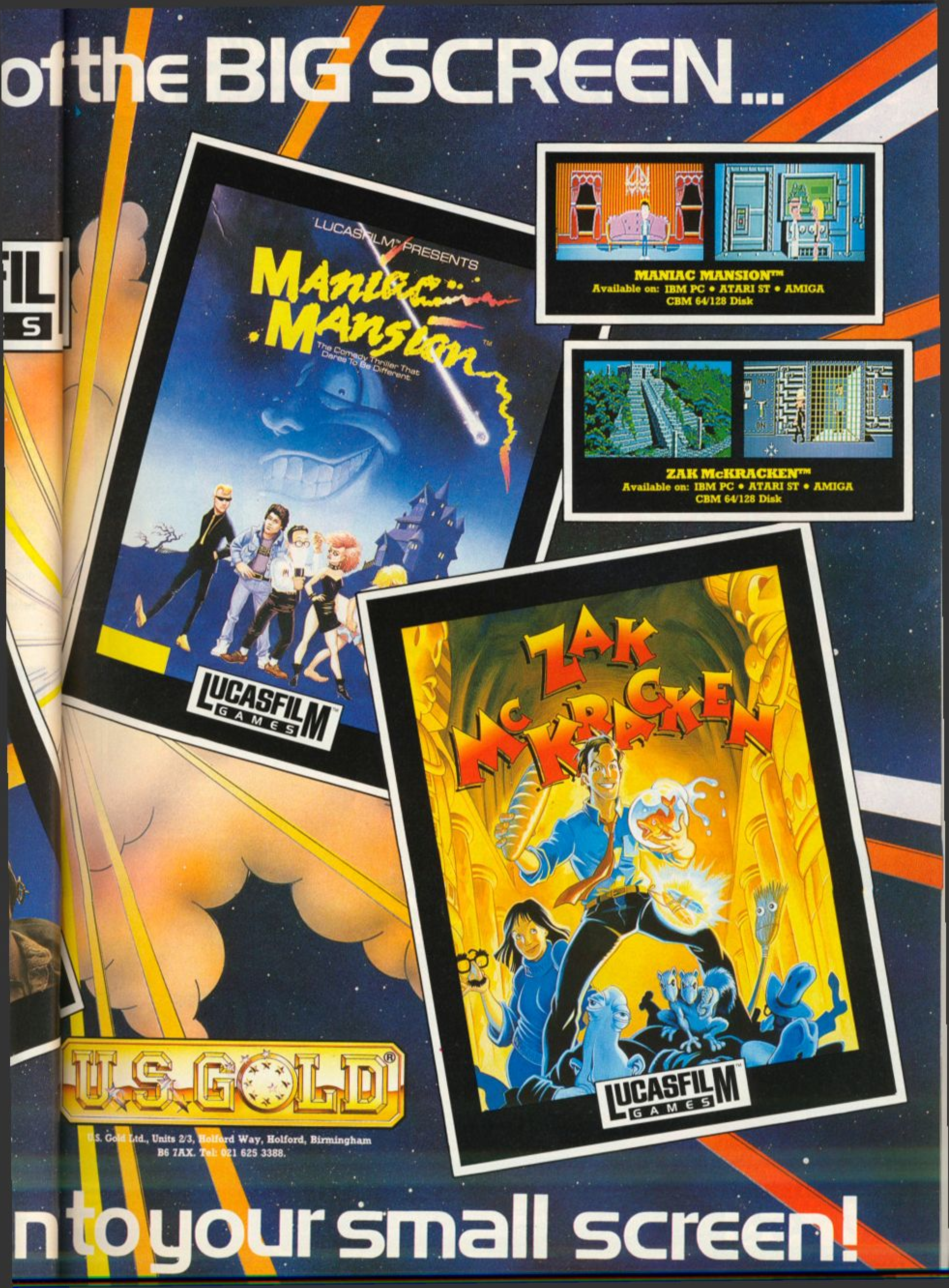
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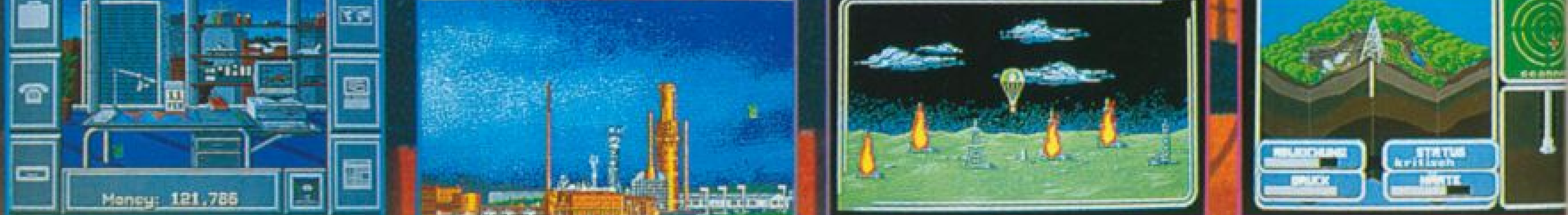
"Brilliant graphics and the sound sequences are quite outstanding." AMIGA USER

C U SCREEN STAR



Screen shots from Amiga version

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DOUBLE DRAGON II

The Virgin Mastertronic game that's twice as hard

AFTER the truly appalling home computer version of *Double Dragon*, it seemed only right for Virgin to knock the idea of the sequel on the head. Sadly though it was a case of an already bought licence, so here it is.

Once more the *Double Dragon* duo set out to right wrongs and rescue people by using their immense karate skills to cause as much damage as possible, usually to the street gangs. At their disposal they have flying kicks, a battery of punches and a rather nasty back-flip which leaves the recipient with their eyes bulging if you get my meaning. In order to preserve their livelihood and their manhood as the case may be, some members of the gangs have armed themselves with daggers, chains and in some cases guns. Luckily for the Dragon brothers, it's possible for them to pick up weapons dropped by beaten opponents and then use them instead of punches. If anything the punch is the most effective move, but the ability to use other weapons helps break the monotony.

Another feature which helps to lighten the game is a little routine which allows you to give your own partner a kicking. Unfortunately look-alikes of the Dragon brothers wander on to the screen from time to time to confuse matters, often resulting in the wrong player being on the end of a right bruising.

Each level is a traditional left to right scroller with a large end of level bad guy (in some cases bad guys) doing their best to reduce you and your pal to pulp. If you should win, the drive whirrs and it's on to the next level, with a very similar selection of baddies, very similar indeed.

The differences between *Double Dragon* and its sequel in the arcades were only minor, a few backdrops, a few sprites. But the change which had to take place on the computer versions needed to be enormous. Thankfully Virgin realised the potential of this game for a the home market and appear to have pulled out all the stops. The graphics have been greatly improved - now larger, better defined, and smoother. When there are a lot of characters on the screen the action hardly slows, but it's the action itself that proves to be one of the faltering points.

An arcade machine has obvious advantages over a home computer, therefore games which appear in your local arcade are going to be head and shoulders above any conversion. In the case of *Double Dragon II* the arcade game featured very smooth moving sprites, complex animation routines, and more colour to handle. the 16-bit versions on the other hand have had to have the colour reduced, some of the graphics shrunk, and fails to play as fast as the original, losing most of the frantic feel which made the arcade machine such a hit. It's in cases like this that a game is not so much of a conversion, more of a re-write.

People who are not familiar with the arcade version should give it a look as it provides lots and lots of indiscriminate beat-em-up action with a good two player mode. Hard core fans of the coin-op are unlikely to be impressed though.

● Mark Patterson

RELEASE BOX		
ATARI ST	£00.00dk	IMMINENT
AMIGA	£00.00dk	IMMINENT
SPECTRUM	£00.00cs • £00.00dk	IMMINENT
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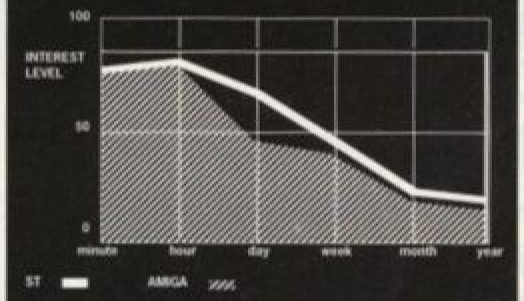
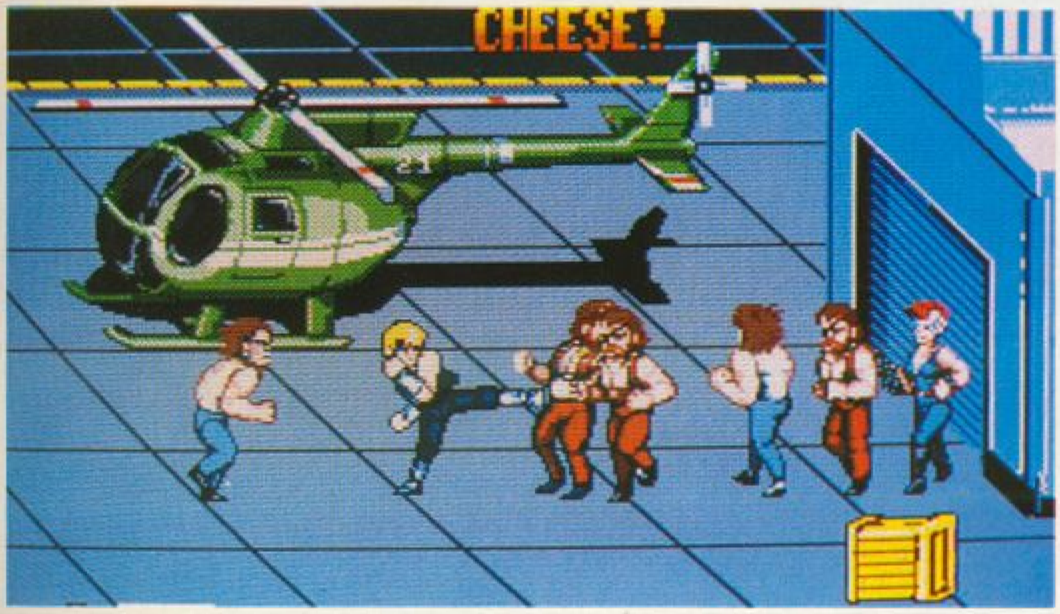
PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE



Fun, but lacks any real endurance, especially on a one player game.



Kick, punch, and generally make a nuisance of yourself in Double Dragon...

AMIGA VERSION

The most noticeable fact is the use of the full screen facility. In most cases this helps to provide a more arcade like feel. Unfortunately, due to the lack of a real perspective effect on the backdrops, the effect is somewhat lost. Unlike the arcade and ST version, *the screen only scrolls left.*

GRAPHICS 7 **IQ FACTOR** 5
AUDIO 6 **FUN FACTOR** 7

ACE RATING 720

ST VERSION

Out of the two versions I've seen, this can claim to be the closest to the original. The graphics are essentially the same as the Amiga version, large and brightly coloured, though the backdrops have changed and have a nice forced perspective look to them. A game that is greatly enhanced by the two player mode.

GRAPHICS 7 **IQ FACTOR** 5
AUDIO 6 **FUN FACTOR** 7

ACE RATING 725

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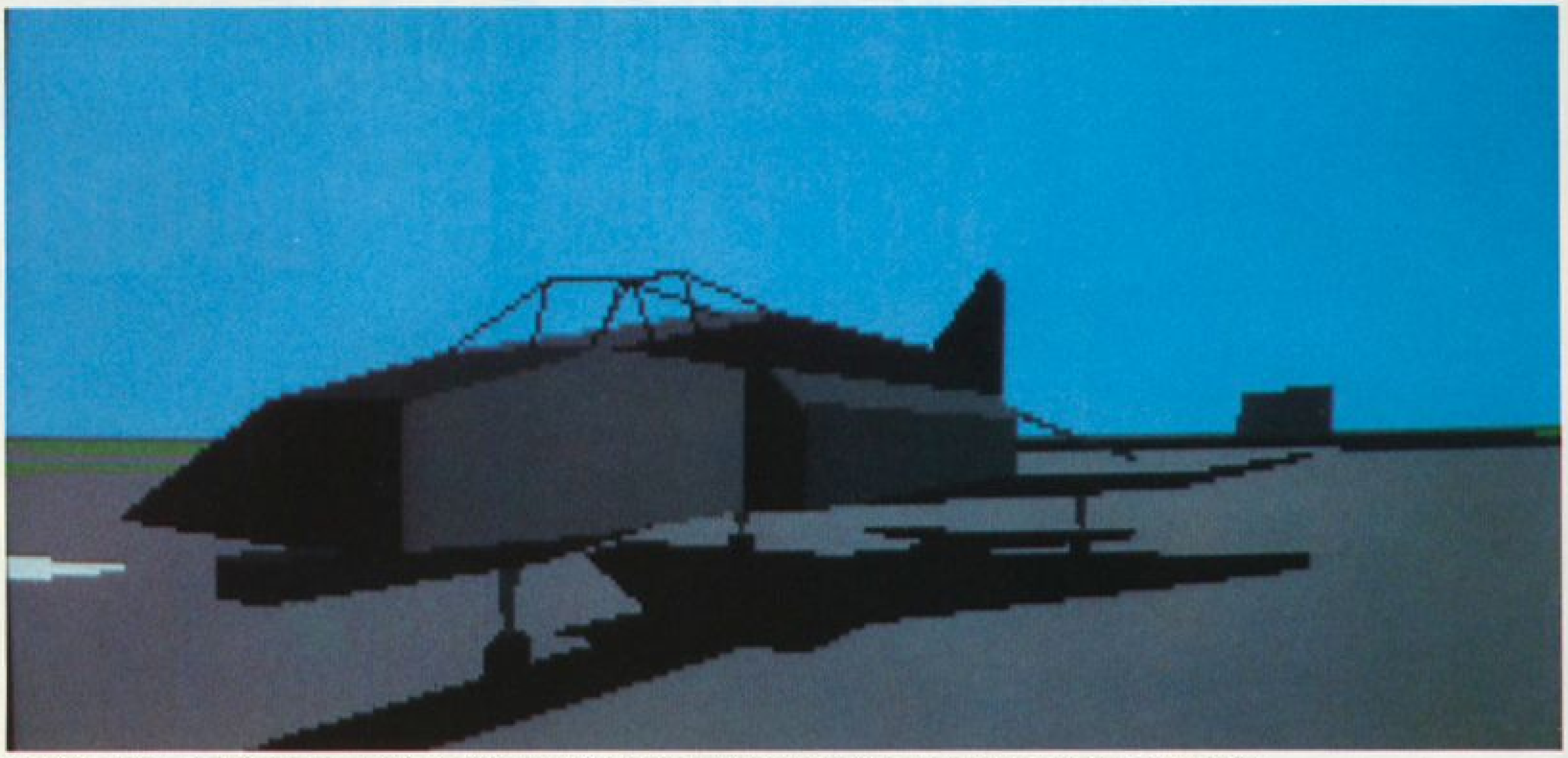
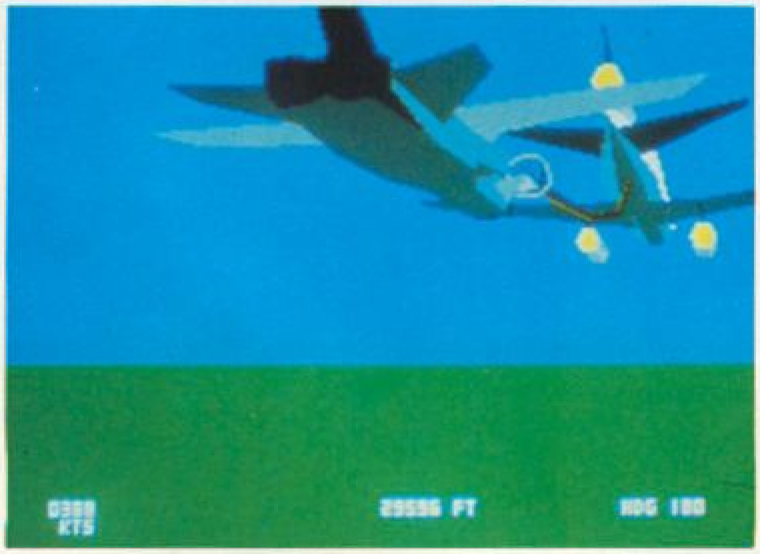


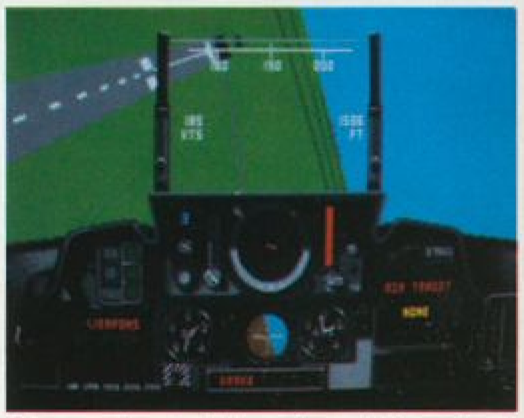
Outside view of jet fighter as it sits on the runway. You can take an outside view of any stage of the action.

BOMBER

Activision drop a bombshell on the flight-sim scene



Aerial refueling has to be mastered to complete the more difficult missions.



You need a cast iron stomach to make this raid on an enemy base.

If fourteen of the best military aircraft from around the world - including an F16 Falcon, F14 Tomcat, Mig-29, Saab AJ37, Mirage 2000 and F15E Strike Eagle – in one sim sounds too good to be believed, then you haven't seen Activision's *Fighter Bomber* yet.

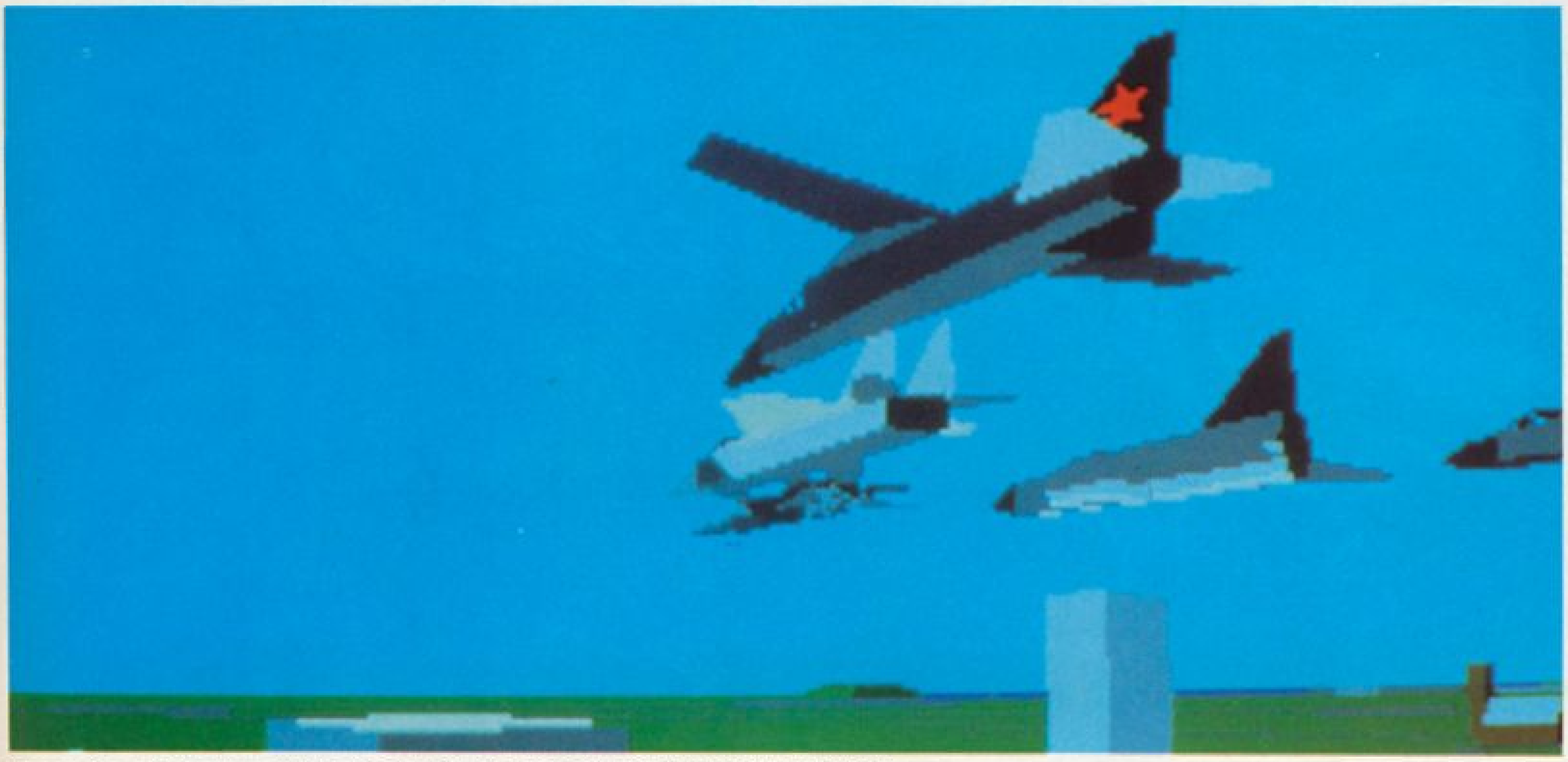
All of the fourteen planes are shown in side view on the selection panel. A 3D view of your chosen plane can be selected, which enables you to view it from all angles as it turns circle in a window of the selection screen. You can also flick through the wide range of armaments that are available - and these, too, look accurate in every detail. There is a price to be paid for these multifarious game options though - you lose some of the detailed flight controls you get in mainstream-sims of the Spectrum Holobyte ilk. But who cares about things like Cockpit Air Pressure, Altitude to the nearest millimeter, or Estimated Time of Arrival at the target? You get there right, you deal shit right, you get out right. *Fighter Bomber* delivers these three key ingredients in no less than sixteen different missions of progressive difficulty.

The Missions are divided into four categories: Covert, Tactical, Strategic and Offensive. After a brief jaunt around Mount Rushmore in 'Free Flight' to get the hang of the controls and have a look at some scenery, you soon hunger after your first mission - Operation Sleeper. The briefing screen informs you that a group of terrorists are holed up in a mountain valley - 60 Km south east of an airforce base. Your mission is to fly in low and take out the terrorists with an "appropriate weapon".

Before setting out on a mission you have the option to look at a video recording of a reconnaissance mission. This is a first for flight games, and a most useful feature. Study every detail of the map as it will help you remember what the target area looks like. In the case of the terrorists, you can get in really close and see their tents and jeeps nestling at the foot of a mountain range; sitting ducks just waiting to taste the heat of your F14's cannon or Maverick missiles.

The details of each mission are only revealed at the briefings, though the objectives are hinted at in the manual, which lists them in true fighter pilot language with names like 'Spearchucker', 'Sam Smasher', 'Big Bird' and 'Molestrangler'.

Although the missions start off easily enough - with an advanced fighter bomber taking out a small terrorist cell - they quickly get a lot more difficult. You come up against real enemies with jet fighters of their own. Careful consideration must be given to fuel limitations, refuelling in mid air, and weapon selection - which all need to be mastered if you are to complete the more difficult missions in the 'Strategic' and 'Offensive' categories.



Enemy aircraft in view and just about to be blasted with Mavericvk missiles.

But Vector Graphix have included a device to keep even the hottest computer Ace's satisfied - a mission design facility.

Another highlight of this excellent flight game is the design feature, enabling you to create and save your own missions every bit as complex as the sixteen predesigned missions that come with the game. Everything can be put in, even the mission briefing.

Flight controls are simple - but responsive and convincing enough to let you lose your self in the game. Whilst in the air you can chose from eleven different views, including a view from the Control Tower, view from enemy aircraft and view your own plane. The view your own plane option is particularly nice – to see your task completed and the target reduced to so much rubble, just sit back and watch the movie.

The aerial dog fights are competent, but lack the manoeuvrability and sophistication of Falcon. But this does not matter as the dogfighting is not the be all and end of all of the game anyway – it's a mere part of the mission, and the game in its entirety has entertainment and playability value in abundance.

A thorough manual provides all you need to know about the various aircraft featured in the game. *Brief details, rather than* page after page of unnecessary description, and a quick and easy guide to get you into the action, rather than putting you to sleep before you have your first go.

Fighter Bomber seems certain to elevate Vector Graphix to the big league of games development. They spent a long time on this one - and it certainly shows. The game gets the balance just right between convincing simulation and entertaining game. Highly recommended.

● Eugene Lacey

PC VERSION

The 3D graphics are totally convincing - even when the plane banks and spins out of control. For a PC it also moves pretty swiftly, depending to a large extent on the power of your machine. But the design of *Fighter Bomber* is so strong that it should work well on most machines - including the Spectrum and C64. Sound lets it down a bit- an F14 Tomcat's after burner sounds a bit like a wasp with a soar throat. But then that's the PC for you.

GRAPHICS	**9**	**IQ FACTOR**	**9**
AUDIO	**5**	**FUN FACTOR**	**9**

ACE RATING 925

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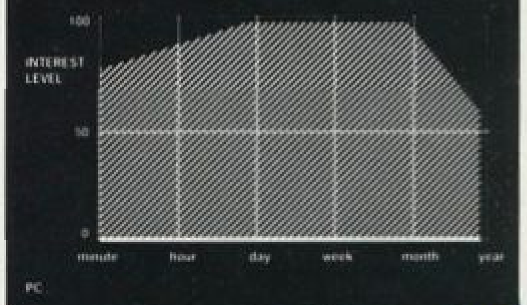
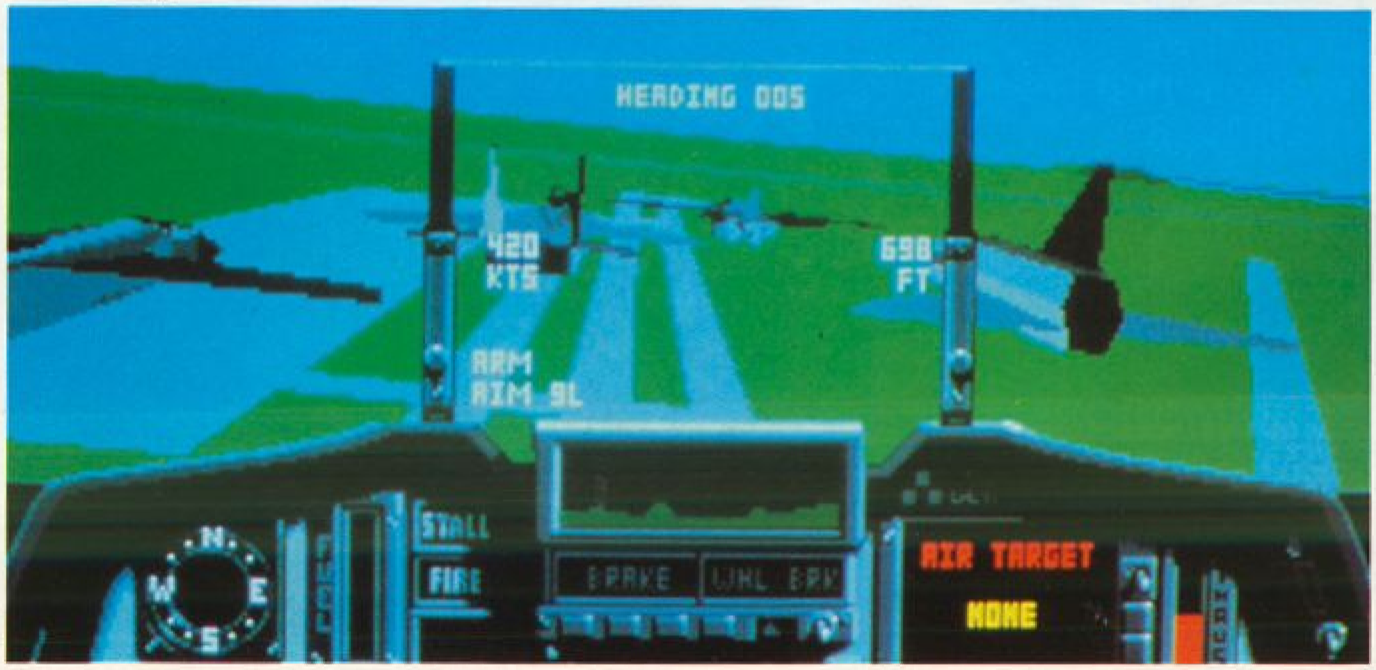
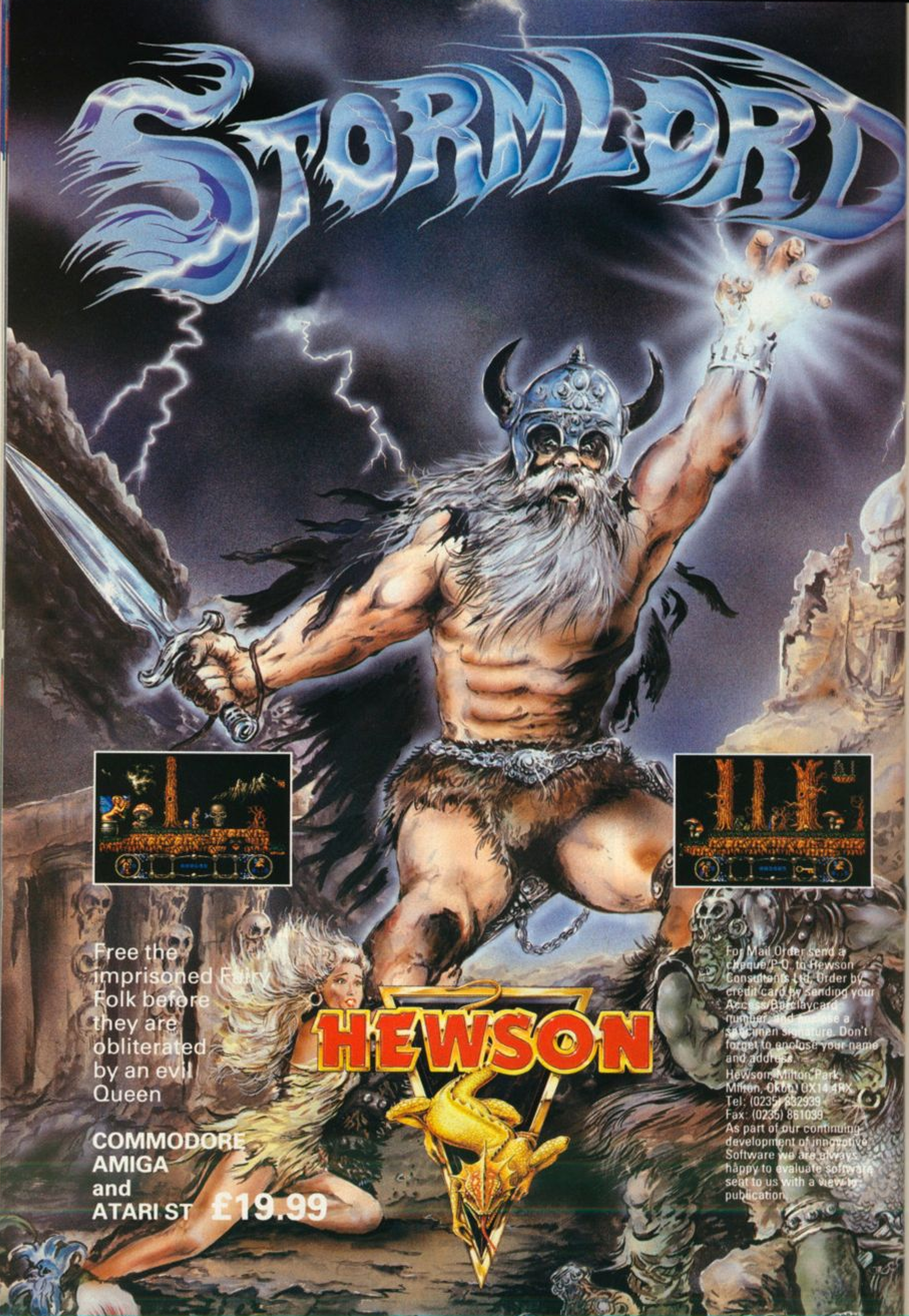


The pre-packed missions will keep you busy for months - the design your own feature will keep you busy for years. Highly ACE



Fighter Bomber - more of a game than a straight simulation.



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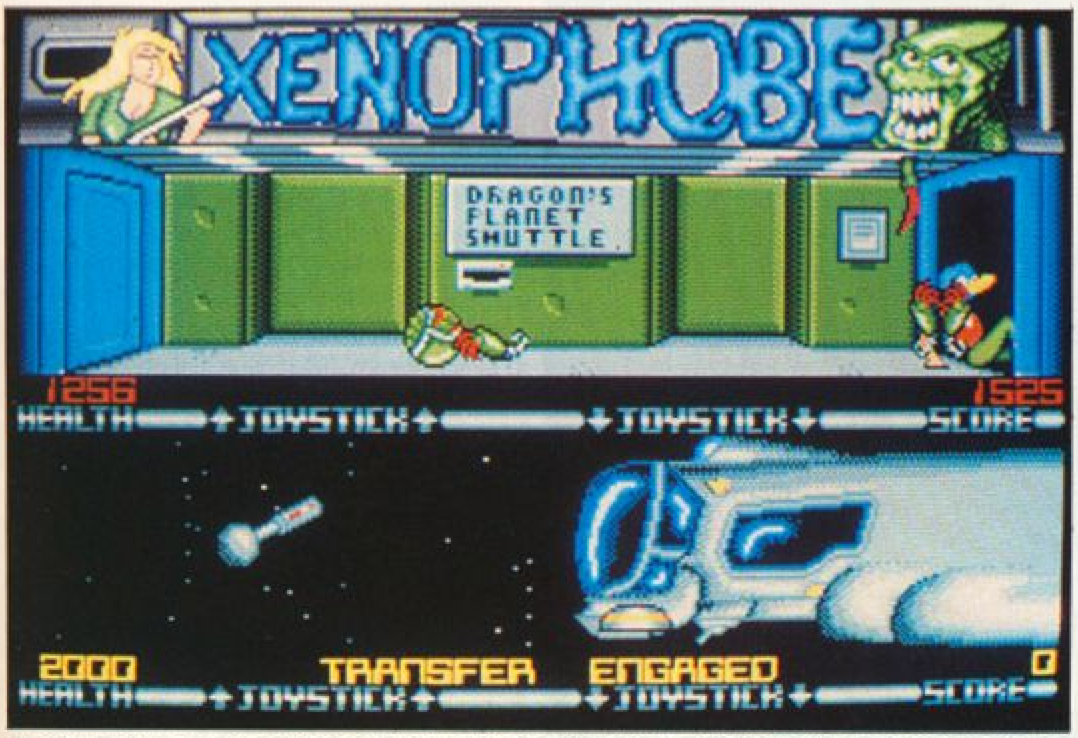

In one-player mode, you can choose any one of nine characters and face the might of the evil Xenos alone. As you can see, the display area isn't large

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A Xenophobe, just in case you didn't know, is someone who has a hatred of foreigners; in the case of this game, it's someone who gets the willies every time they come across an alien. And who wouldn't? Pull the trigger first and attempt the alien lingo later is a motto that's safeguarded many a pioneering space cadet.

Xenophobe is also a fairly mediocre Bally Midway coin-op of the same name, now a couple of years old and at its best with more than one player. It depicts a future Earth at war with itself until mysterious waves of bug-eyed monsters (known, appropriately enough, as Xenos) infiltrated the Solar System. A cynical space mercenary called Schickn is sent to investigate Space Station Zero One Five, now occupied by things from another world.

Basically, this is a one- or two-player game which involves you choosing one of nine crew members and materialising on the space station of your choice ready to kick some bug-eyed monster ass. There are plenty of different aliens, including pernicious pods, cutey critters and garrotting tentacles – but in practice they're not significantly different.

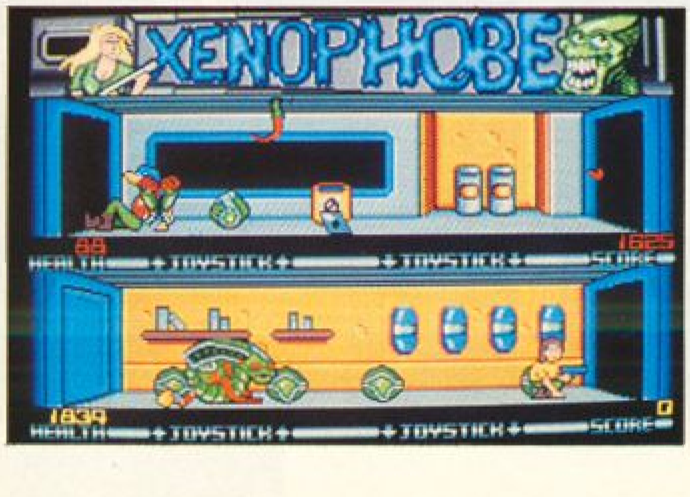
You can also pick up plenty of weapons, including a pretty handy laser pistol (just about the most satisfying), bombs, lightning rifle and – the Trekkies' favourite – a phaser. If you drop your weapon, another one will be left by a droid, but in the meantime you can engage in some good old fashioned fisticuffs.

There are three outcomes of all this alien-bashing. If you let the bad guys overrun the base, it self-destructs after you've returned to the mothership. Alternatively, you can order a 'fast destruct' to prevent it from being overrun by Xenos. Finally, clear the base of ALFs (a percentage of aliens remaining is occasionally shown on the walls behind you) and you can troll off to the next. This means more multiloading, which can be a pain if you want to get straight back into the action.

There are several things wrong with *Xenophobe*, not least of which is the multiload. It's bad enough having to reload a disk to reset the options (number of players; music/sound effects; starting level), so there isn't much hope for the cassette version. Another niggle is the one-player mode – you get about a third of the screen to play in, whilst the word 'Xenophobe' bounces around and flashes annoyingly beneath you.

The worst aspect, though, is the monotony. Walking from room to similar room blasting aliens, picking up discarded hardware and blasting more aliens becomes very tedious, since there's very little inter-level variety. However, before you go thinking this is a complete waste of time, one thing has to be said in its favour: the free music cassette that comes with the package is excellent – one of the best you'll find. If only the same could be said for the game.

● Gordon Houghton



Many hands make light work, and a couple of exterminators make alien soup of the opposition. If you've got a friend (everyone has one somewhere), this is by far the best way to play *Xenophobe*

ST VERSION

Better performance than the C64 version. Graphics and sound are both reasonably slick, although the machine is not really stretched in either department. Playability, however, remains a problem.

GRAPHICS	**6**	**IQ FACTOR**	**6**
AUDIO	**6**	**FUN FACTOR**	**3**

ACE RATING 585

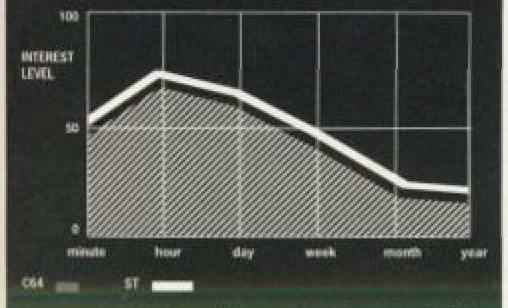
C64 VERSION

The graphics and sound do nothing to compensate for the tedium of a slow loader and dull gameplay. Ten quid is a lot to pay for a brilliant soundtrack tape and a dull game, and even fans of the coin-op should be wary of this conversion.

GRAPHICS	**5**	**IQ FACTOR**	**6**
AUDIO	**6**	**FUN FACTOR**	**3**

ACE RATING 492

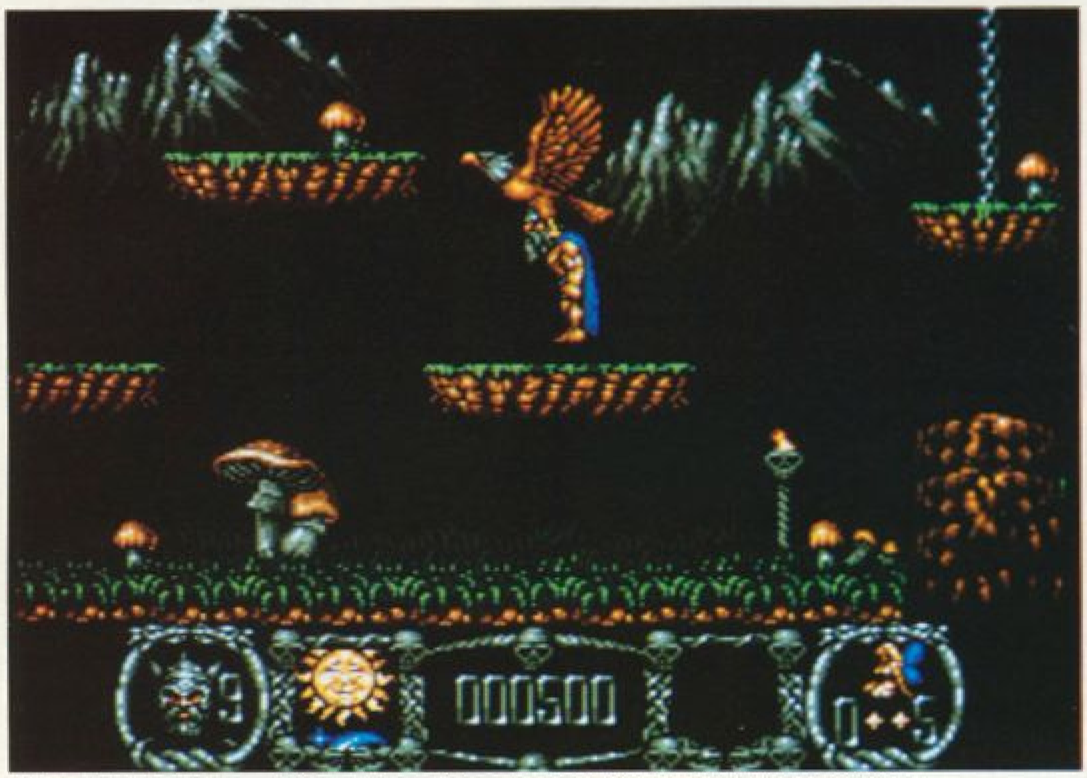
PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE



Once you start working out what to do, it's good fun for a while, but even with two players this soon leads to boredom.

STORMLORD

Hewson is set to take 16-bit games by storm



Where Eagles Dare — Stormlord cadges a quick lift from helpful Mael Ovin!

IT has been a long time since I have come across a game that has got it right in just about every department. So very often development teams spend a long time getting graphics and sound down to a tee and then disappoint us with the gameplay. Alternatively the game will play really well, but the visuals let it down in a big way.

The first impression you receive from Stormlord is one of graphical excellence. A pretty title screen leads you on to a dark and mysterious two-dimensional landscape full of superbly animated creatures. Then when the great soundtrack reaches your ears you know you're in for an audio-visual treat.

That fact alone would probably be enough to ensure that this title sells fairly well, especially since many reviewers can easily be won over by a few pretty pics and tuneful ditties.

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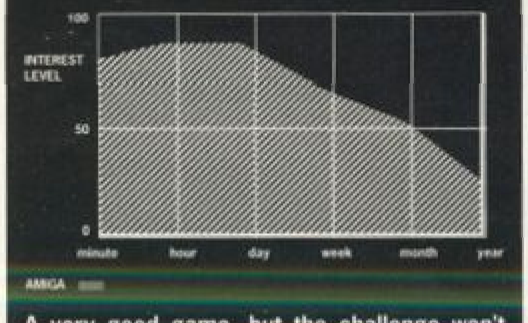
AMIGA VERSION

Great graphics, great sound, and great gameplay. It's all too easy to drastically under use the Amiga in conversions of 8-bit games, but Hewson have obviously gone to a lot of trouble to ensure that *Stormlord* really uses all of the advanced features of this machine, making this version look like a completely new game.

GRAPHICS	**8**	**IQ FACTOR**	**6**
AUDIO	**8**	**FUN FACTOR**	**8**

ACE RATING 860

PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE



A very good game, but the challenge won't last for long.

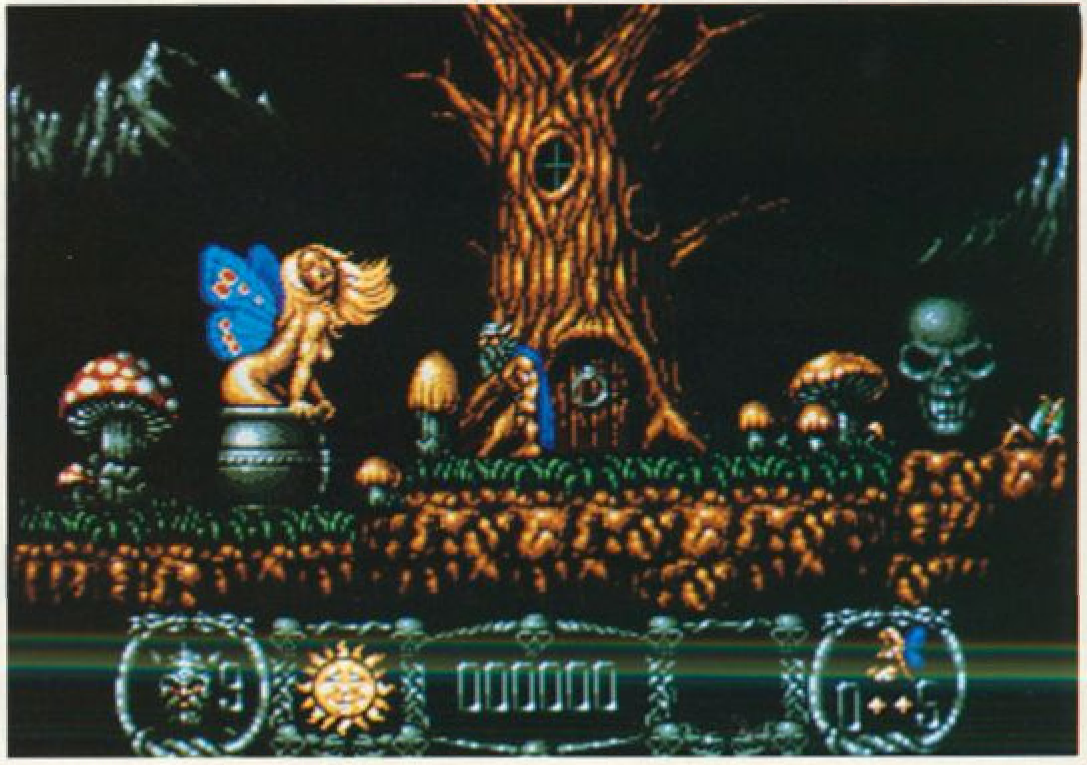
But the merits of Stormlord do not stop here by any means. There is actually a very playable and addictive game behind all the effects. As a measure of Stormlord's excellence, it took a lot of willpower for me to drag myself away from the machine to write this review. Often I'm only to happy to head for the nearest word processor.

Raffaelle Cecco's original version of the game was first seen in May on 8-bit formats, and was well-received at the time. It is nice to see that, rather than producing mediocre 16-bit conversions and riding on the success of the 8-bit programs, Hewson have gone to the trouble to ensure that the advanced features of 16-bit machines are used to the full.

The scenario involves the rescue of the imprisoned faery folk and the subsequent delivery of the land from the rule of the evil queen. If that sounds a little twee don't worry, Stormlord has its fair share of monster mashing for those who enjoy that sort of thing.

You play the Stormlord of the title, a very Nordic looking type with full beard and flowing cape. Quick presses of the fire button will have him throw fireballs. These are not too powerful, so some creatures may need several hits to destroy them. Hold the fire button for slightly longer and the Stormlord fires swords in a manner similar to the knight in Ghosts and Gob-

▼ The unclad faery evokes a wolf whistle if you cross her with sound effects on.



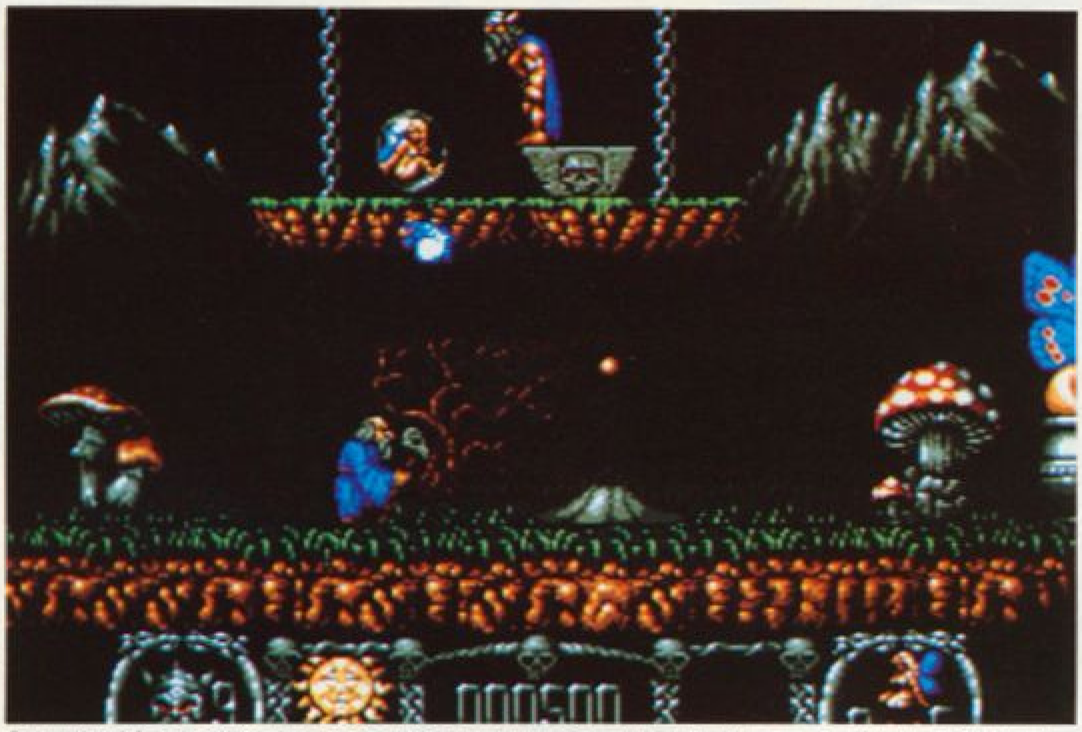
lins. These are far more effective, but can't be fired quite as frequently.

Each of the faeries is trapped in a bubble and all you need to do to is touch this to release them. Unfortunately there are various hazards to be overcome in order to reach the captives. These include collapsing platforms, Venus flytraps, giant worms, and an assortment of other deadly creatures. Most are fairly easy to dispatch provided you are in the right place at the right time.

Although making mincemeat of monsters is a major part of the game, there is another aspect which must be mastered if you are to make any progress. This involves the various objects which can be found lying around. You must find out through trial and error which object you need to be carrying at which time. This inevitably costs a few lives but, once you have discovered what you need to be carrying and when, it is simply a matter of practising till you get the timing and technique right.

One very nice feature in the game is the way you can travel quickly between distant locations. We've all seen boring old transporter pads before, but how's this for originality. Step on one of the stone blocks scattered throughout the level and a giant Eagle, Mael Ovin, will swoop down and carry you off to another block located elsewhere. It looks very impressive, and really shows off the smooth and fast horizontal scrolling.

If you do manage to rescue all the faeries on a level before your nine lives have all been used up then you are allowed to play a subgame. In this the faeries all fly above you and you must try and blow kisses at them to make them fall in love (aaahh!). If you manage to hit a faery with a kiss she will shed a tear for you to collect. Collect ten tears before your time or kisses run out and you are awarded an extra life.



Stormlord is about to burst the bubble and release the first faery, but he had better be quick; if that wizard's bolt hits him it's gonna hurt!

This is actually not as easy as it sounds since the faeries move quite rapidly and the tears often dissolve before you manage to reach them. Still, it does provide an interlude between the main levels which adds a bit more interest to the game.

The graphics are absolutely brilliant and really can't be faulted in any respect. The quality of both the animation and the scrolling has to be seen to be believed. The soundtrack is also one of the best I have heard for a while, but even if you do get tired of it you can replace it with some amusing sound effects.

There are six levels to complete in the game. You will find the first couple of levels reasonably easy, but I suspect that later levels might prove frustratingly difficult. Hewson have certainly lived up to their reputation for excellence with this title, all I can say in conclusion is: buy it — you won't be disappointed!

● Laurence Scotford

CTW Survey '89 CTW Survey

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5. Zzap
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8. Gamesweek (Combined with Pop mid-Feb)

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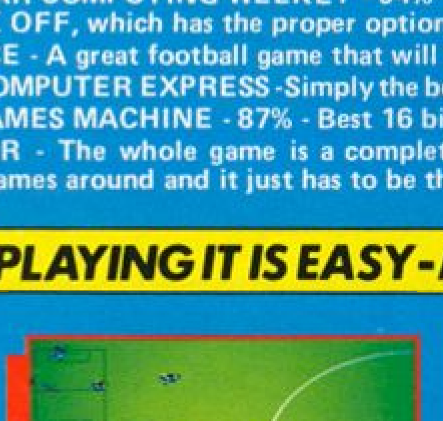
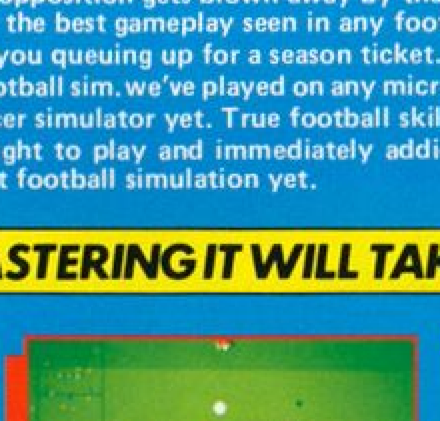
SIZZLER

PLAYING IT IS EASY - MASTERING IT WILL TAKE TIME - A LOT OF TIME



AMIGA



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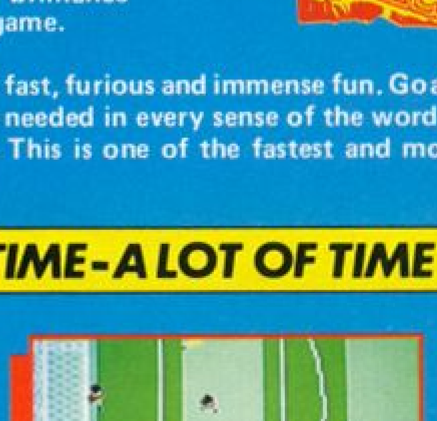

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DAY OF THE PHARAOH

STRATEGY/Management games were always popular projects on early micros because they were easy to implement, and did not heavily rely on complicated graphics and sound. They usually had very broad, unimaginative names like Kingdom, Dictator, or Millionaire, and put you into the sort of position where you had to make important day to day decisions in order to retain, or increase your current status.

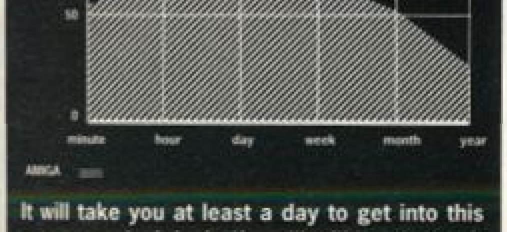
The games progressed as a series of turns, each of which represented a period of time, like a day, week, or month. On each turn you had to make a number of decisions related to various aspects of your position. These might be financial or business decisions, or possibly affairs of state. At any rate your success or otherwise depended on how well you made those vital choices. Day of the Pharaoh's roots are firmly in the Management/Strategy genre. Unlike those simple, early games, however, it offers a lot more.

Things are going badly wrong in Egypt. The old Pharaoh has gone and snuffed it leaving a lot of nasty power-hungry types ready to step into his shoes. This horrible lot are being led on by the evil god Seth, who orders them to kill off all of the Pharaoh's descendents, in return for which, they will inherit the throne.

You happen to be one of the rightful heirs to the throne, but, unlike your unlucky relatives, you are saved from drowning in the Nile by the Sun God Amon-Re. You grow up as a prince amongst paupers, unaware of your true destiny until one night the god Osiris (yeah, there's quite a few of these guys) appears to you in a dream and leaves you with silver and a single merchant ship. Your task is to be succesful enough as a merchant trader to rise through the Egyptian social ranks and eventually retake the throne.

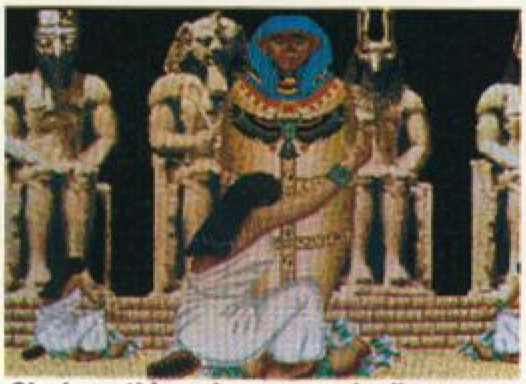
The major part of the game is trading. To do this you must travel the Nile to reach various towns. This is where the first of several sub-games comes in. Once you have selected your destination, a view of the prow of your ship appears bouncing forward through the water. You must now steer it through the rocks that come towards you with alarming rapidity. Hit too many rocks and you'll lose half your cargo - not very helpful!

PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE



It will take you at least a day to get into this one properly. I doubt if you'll still be playing it much after a couple of months though.

Take a quick trip down the Nile, courtesy of Rainbow Arts.



Oh dear, things have gone badly wrong, and you're off to meet Seth in person.

You may also have to deal with theiving phoenicians (or 'phenicians' as the programmers spell it!). These nasty blighters raid your ship after a bit of successful trading and the only way to stop them is by whacking them over the head with one of the ships oars, which takes a bit of mastering.

Once you have built up a good stock of commodities you can engage in a some more prestigious activities. These include honouring one of the gods, or taking a wife, both of which will require you to have fairly substantial offerings to hand. In the later stages of the game you can also indulge in a little architecture, although you really will have to be a big-wig before this is possible.

If sensible trading is too slow for you it is also possible to lay the occasional wager on a camel race. Beware though, we are talking big stakes here - nobody in these parts wagers anything less than a whole shipful of cargo.

Even if you are trading fairly well, not everything is all sunshine and roses - you will inevitably have to deal with the occasional conflict. If you are to cope with these effectively you must have a good line up of war chariots. Each conflict involves another sub-game in which you control a charioteer and an accompanying archer. Your aim is to fell as many of the enemy as possible without being hit yourself. Like the phoenician sub-game, this takes a little while to get used to.

Day of the pharaoh is an unusual conglomoration of simple arcade-type sequences and more involved strategy/management type gameplay. Graphically, the whole thing is up to Rainbow Arts usual degree of excellence. Menus and messages are presented on authentic looking pieces of papyrus, or scrolls. Sound is limited to the occasional spot effect, although what there is has been done quite well.

One very nice feature is that you can freely swap between the mouse, keyboard, and joystick at any stage of the game. This turns out to be very useful indeed because you use the mouse while you are selecting from menus, then change to the joystick for action sequences. Rainbow Arts have obviously gone to a lot of time and trouble to make Day of the Pharaoh as appealing as possible while retaining as many of the qualities of those old strategy games as they could. The resulting game, however, doesn't quite hang together. The individual elements are all very nice, but as a whole I don't think there's enough here to keep your interest for long.

● Laurence Scotford

AMIGA VERSION

Day of the Pharaoh looks quite sexy on the Amiga, although it obviously isn't stretching the machine that much. I won't be surprised if the game looks and plays exactly the same on the ST. If you are a hardened shoot-em-up addict, then this game will do nothing for you whatsoever. Those of you who enjoy putting the brain in gear from time to time might be advised to take a look though.

GRAPHICS	**7**	**IQ FACTOR**	**7**
AUDIO	**4**	**FUN FACTOR**	**5**

ACE RATING 625

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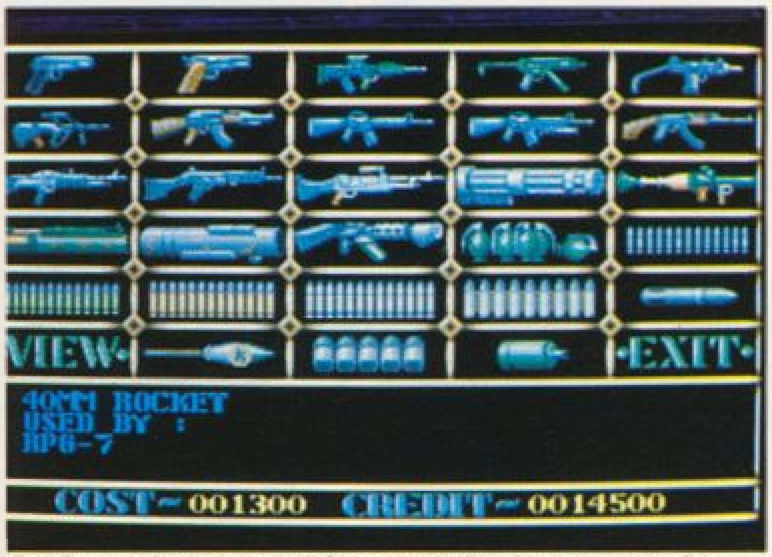
DOGS OF WAR

Mercenary Elite go to war again...



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Ready to select weapons for yet another bloody campaign

IT seems to me that Elite's most successful titles have always been those that are the least complex and rely most on addictive gameplay. *Kokotoni Wilf, Bombjack, Bombjack II*, Ghosts and Goblins - remember those? The one thing that characterised them all was that they were games you would quite happily come back to time and time again, but they didn't necessarily have either graphics or sound that competed with some of the other big titles around at the time.

The funny thing is that they didn't really need lots of frilly bits. The actual design of each game was good enough to carry it alone. Add larger, more colourful sprites and more complex sound, and you would probably end up with a slower, less playable, and ultimately less appealing game.

Another title that falls into this category is *Ikari Warriors:* Tiny squat figures running around firing dots and little circles at each other. It doesn't exactly sound like a winner does it? But it was actually one hell of a chart-topping success. It was also another one of those games that was perfect as it was. So what if it didn't have the greatest graphics or sound of the century, it was still a very enjoyable, and above all, addictive game.

What Elite have gone and done now is enlisted the master of *Ikari Warrior* clones, Steve Bak, to produce - guess what? Another *Ikari Warrior* clone. You are a mercenary trying to make your fortune by accepting contracts from various organisations and individuals. These involve either the recovery of stolen objects or kidnapped and imprisoned persons, or the annihilation of unwanted ones.

You begin with a small amount of capital and once you have accepted a mission you must use this to buy any weaponry and ammunition you need. This is done by placing a cursor over the images of the items you wish to acquire. The cost of the item is deducted automatically from your balance. This is fine to begin with - the ability to tailor your firepower should add some extra interest to a rather hackneyed theme. Unfortunately the implementation of this feature leaves a lot to be desired. If you want more than one quantity of a particular item you have to hold the fire button down until you have as many as you require. When you are stocking up on ammunition this becomes very tedious.

The other problem is that you have to go through this rigmarole at the start of each mission, even if you want exactly the same combination of weapons. It would have been nice to have the option of saving favourite weapons combinations which could be selected instantly instead of having to rebuild the selection from scratch.

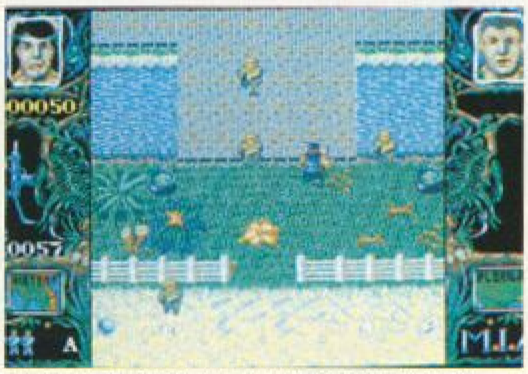
When you do actually get into the game itself, you should survive just long enough to realise that it looks very much like *Ikari Warriors*, but plays nothing like it. Although the objectives and the way that you play the game are largely the same , *Dogs of War* just doesn't play as well . The game actually relies on the effective use of a combination of weapons to deal with different sections of the game. While an SMG might be superbly useful in the opening stages of each game, it is less than useless when you are confronted by a couple of huge armoured vehicles.

The way that you actually swap the weapon in use is by tapping the left side of the keyboard. This cycles through the weapons you possess. In theory this a fine, but in practise it doesn't work very well. If you have, say, a machine gun for slaughtering ordinary troops, a handful of grenades to clear behind walls, and a rocket launcher for putting armoured vehicles out of action, you may need a couple of key presses before you get exactly what you want. By the time you have the correct weapon called up and fired you have been splattered to the four winds.

The pace of the game is so fast, and the opposition so strong that even without the awkward weapon swapping you are going to have a hard time surviving. I suspect that the game will actually prove a lot more playable if you use the simultaneous two-player option. As far as solo play is concerned, be prepared for many frustrating hours trying to last longer than five minutes.

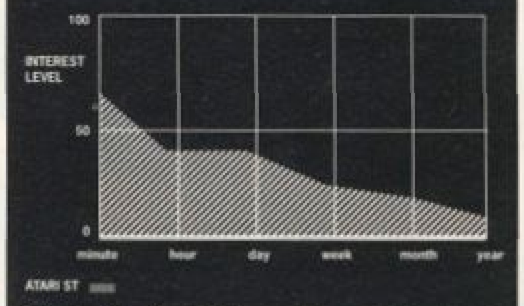
I can see what Elite are trying to do here, and in part I think this is a good effort. The choice of missions is a good idea, although to be honest the appeal here lies mainly in the change of background graphics. The choice of weapons too could have been a good feature, but because of the reasons I have pointed out, becomes more of an annoyance than anything else. What you have in *Dogs of War* is essentially *Ikari Warriors* with bells and whistles, but unfortunately the bells and whistles only succeed in detracting from the original concept of the game.

● Laurence Scotford



It's hardly 'Bridge over the river Kwai'!

PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE



It looks like it might be a winner at first, but it doesn't have the lasting appear of Ikari warriors.

RELEASE BOX

ATARI ST	£19.99dk	IMMINENT
AMIGA	£19.99dk	IMMINENT

ATARI ST VERSION

There's not really a lot between this and the Amiga version. Yep, it's one of those games that has been developed across both machines in an identical fashion. See the Amiga box for comments.

GRAPHICS	**6**	**IQ FACTOR**	**2**
AUDIO	**6**	**FUN FACTOR**	**6**

ACE RATING 650

AMIGA VERSION

Graphics are an improvement on those in the 16-bit version of Ikari Warriors, and there is a bearable soundtrack by Dave Whitaker. Playability wise this is not up to Ikari standards, but if you have someone else to hand for a two-player game, then it might be worth taking a look...

GRAPHICS	**6**	**IQ FACTOR**	**2**
AUDIO	**6**	**FUN FACTOR**	**6**

ACE RATING 650

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Screen shots from Atari ST version.

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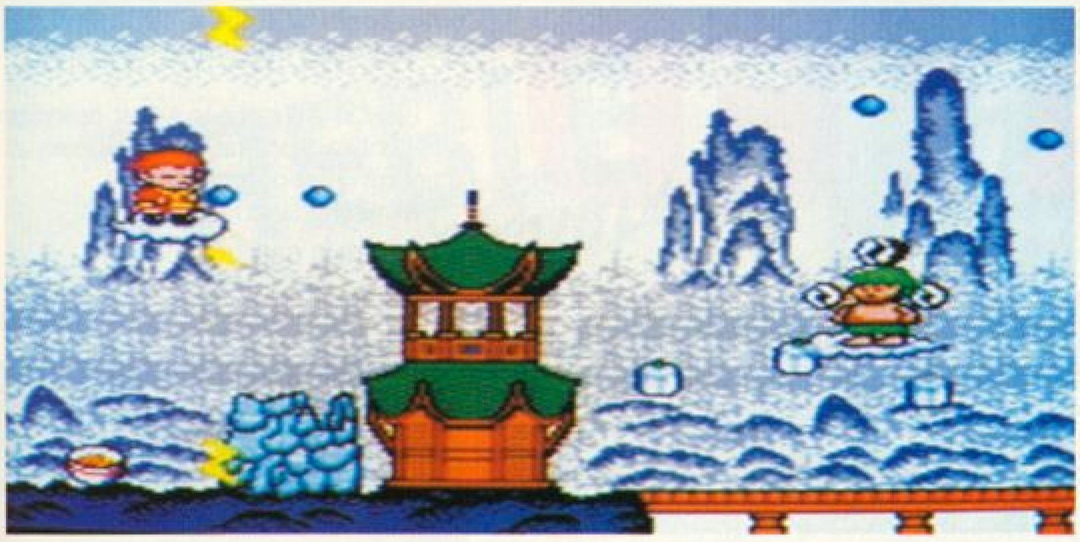
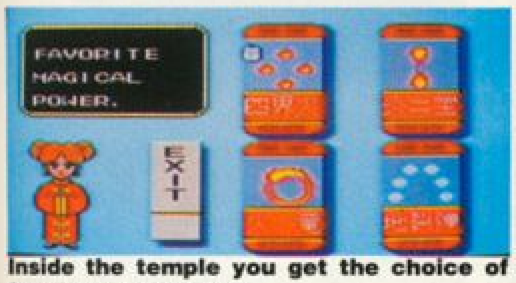


Cloud Master comes up against a mid-level nasty riding a rival cloud. He is spewing mega-flak and is determined to stop you getting into that temple.

CLOUD MASTER

Every cloud has a SEGA lining



Inside the temple you get the choice of four super weapons.

MOUNT Gyogo is a very weird place. A high mountain range dotted with Buddhist temples and some very strange creatures.

This beautiful mountain provides the scrolling terrain for *Cloud Master*, the latest horizontal shoot'em-up for the Sega. At first glance it is easy to get the impression that you are looking at an Amiga or ST game – so sharp and colourful are the graphics. This sharpness is created by a black line around all the objects on screen, giving the impression of cartoon animation.

The enhanced graphics and depth of game play are due to a new more powerful type of cartridge with greater memory, now being used by Sega in some of the latest Master System games.

The game itself offers nothing new, apart from its weird characters and the addictiveness of its game play. A tough shoot'em-up with the ubiquitous end of level nasties that seem to absorb endless amounts of Cloud Master bullets before blowing.

Our red hairded Japanese-looking hero – bearing an uncanny resemblance to Wonder Boy – sails through the five levels of the game aboard a fluffy white cloud

About half way through level one Cloud Master comes up against an adversary on a cloud. Almost impossible to blast off his cloud without at least two power-ups this nasty has the annoying habit of doing a fly past - guns blazing - every time he gets the better of you.

Get past this mid-point and a window opens up in the upper floor of a Buddhist temple. Go inside and take your pick from a choice of four super weapons. Whatever you pick, the computer comes up with "ah, yes, a very good choice".

I found the four revolving balls of flame to be the most effective in your encounter with the first end of level nasty, which follows shortly after your visit to the temple.

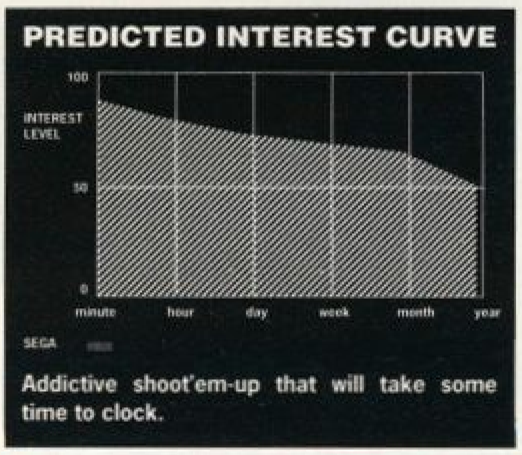
This nasty will crack you up. A giant hen, beautifully drawn, and again graphically superior to many other end of level guardians from 16-bit games. This hen is no chicken (Sorry), very tough in fact, spitting mouthfuls of darts at you and taking several hits to kill. To best the end of level baddies you need to manoeuvre constantly to avoid the flak as well as continually pumping the fire button. Nice and tough, just as it should be.

There are five levels in total. Mount Gyogo is followed by the River Kwo, and then then three other levels of increasing difficulty. As you float though the levels on your cloud you are far from lonely as you as machine gun toting pigs take pot shots at you - and someone, or something, is flinging pigs and cats heads at you from the right of the screen, just out of view.

This is a welcome addition to the Sega's shoot'em-up catalogue.The only other decent horizontal blaster is *R-Type* - which was a bit glitchy and perhaps too much for the SMS to handle. *Cloud Master* is just right - fast, pretty, and tough.

ACE RATING 845

● Eugene Lacey



Addictive shoot'em-up that will take some time to clock.

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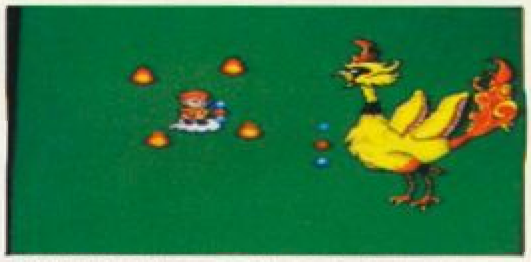
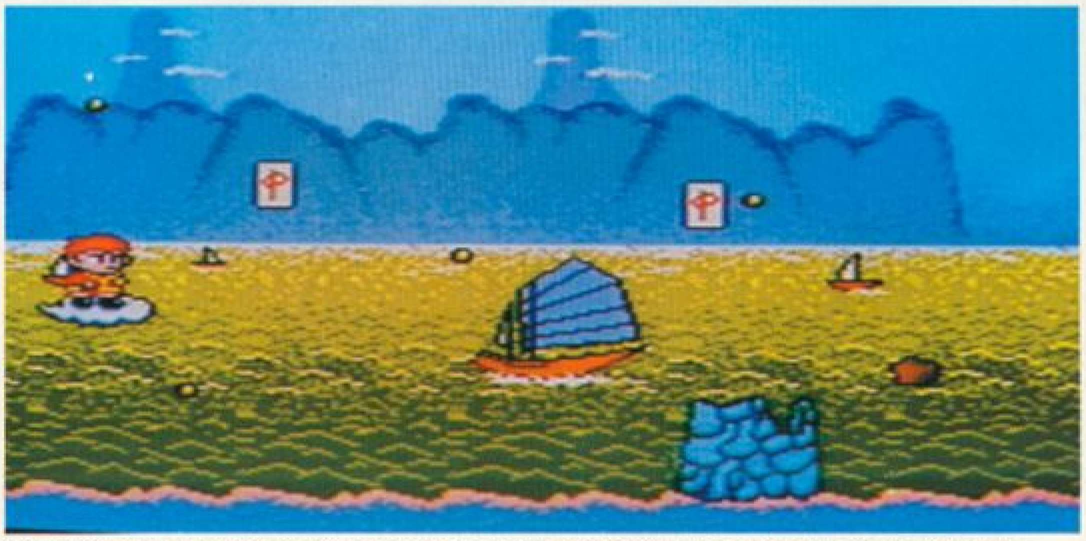


End of level one nasty, or turkey even.



The pace increases on level two as Cloud Master gets ready for the mad monkeys.

WANTED

SEGA wants you Dead or Alive…

WANTED is a wild west shoot-'em-up for the Master System. Take your trusty Light Phaser six shooter off the shelf, strap it onto your holster, hop on your 'hoss, and go gunning for law braking cowboys in Tombstone City.

The gang members up from behind barrels and appear in windows taking pot shots at you and then ducking back sown again. You need to be quick on the draw to bag them. Other cowboys are more sneaky, pulling a gun on you as they stroll nonchalantly along the side walk.

Your Light Phaser has an unlimited amount of bullets but your energy metre does not - and inches slowly, but surely, towards zero if you swallow too much lead.

Graphics are bright and colourful and there is a nice ricochet sound as the bullets fly around Tombstone. If you survive the shoot out with the gang members you will come up against a final show down the gang leader at the end of level one.

Other levels offer a shooting gallery where you can get some target practice and earn bonus points by shooting the bottles, glasses and saloon ash trays that scroll past on a conveyor belt.

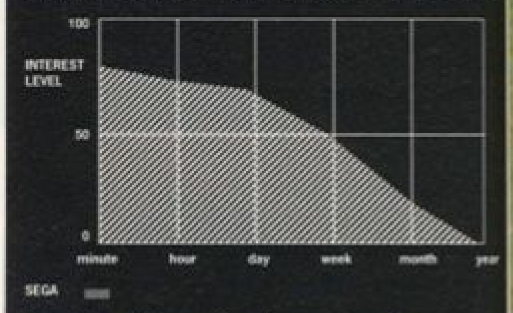
Later in the game is a neat desert scene with giant cacti and tall mountain peaks as the shoot out rages on horse back.

A must for Light Phaser owners.

ACE RATING 635

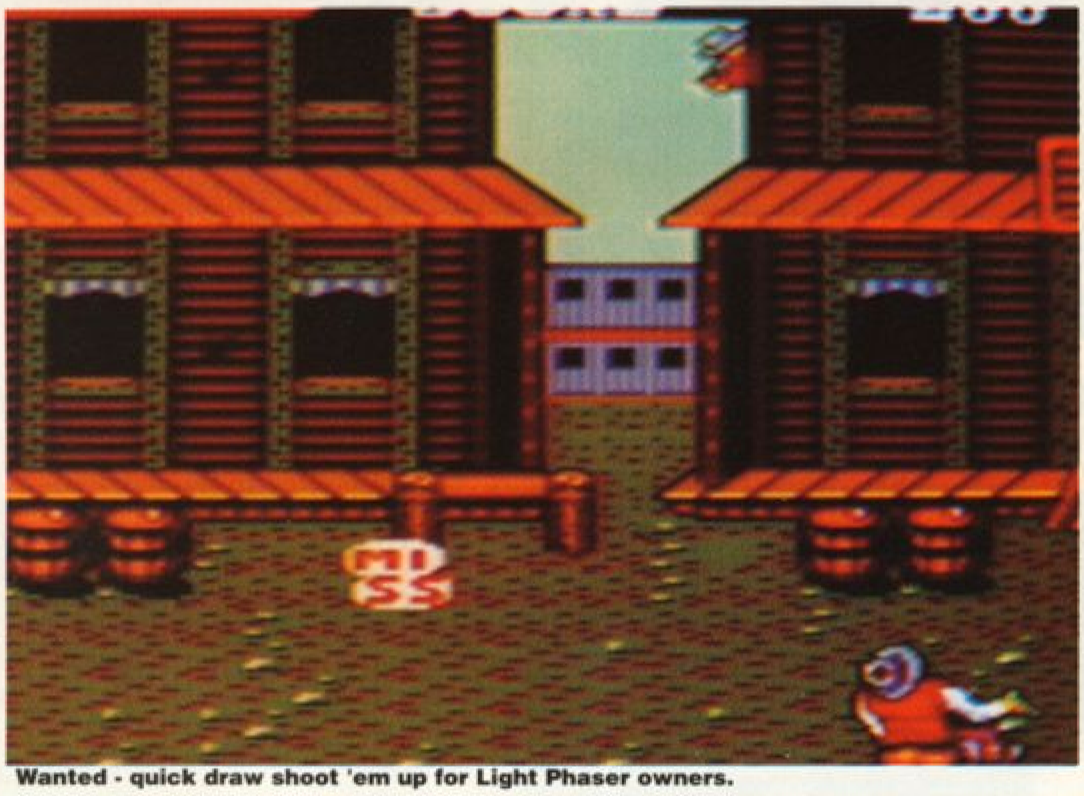
● Eugene Lacey

PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE

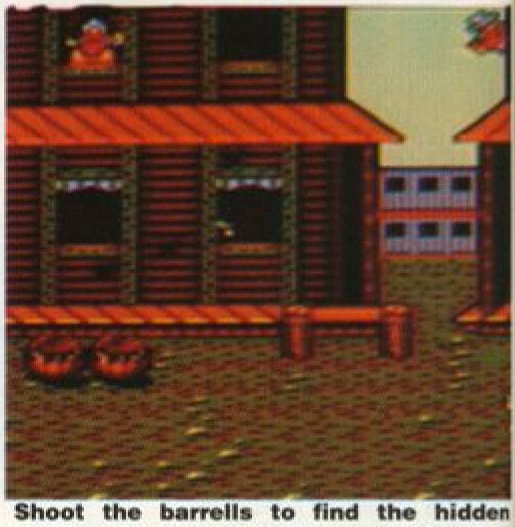


Amusing wild west fun, but no classic

RELEASE BOX		
SEGA	£19.95dk	OUT NOW



Wanted - quick draw shoot 'em up for Light Phaser owners.



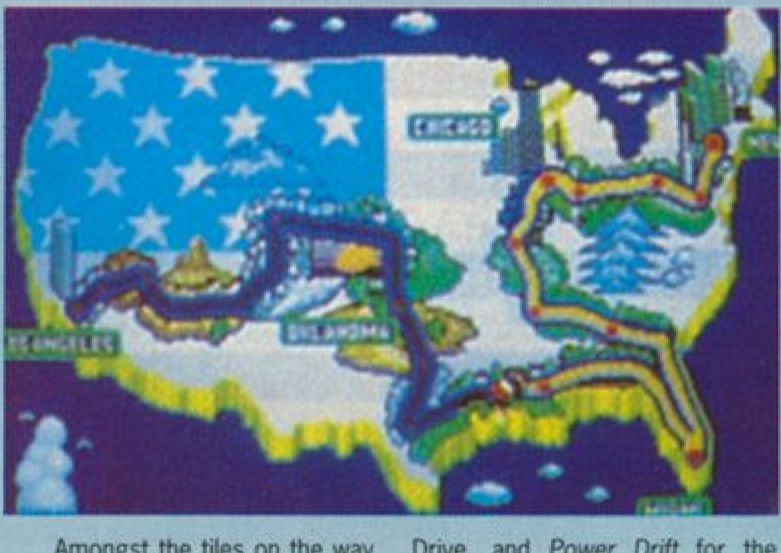
Shoot the barrells to find the hidden bombs. These are cowboy smart bombs.

CONSOLE NEWS

Console racers gear up for next year

Console owners may be feeling a bit left behind with the biggest range of home computer racing games ever launched about to hit the shelves this Christmas.

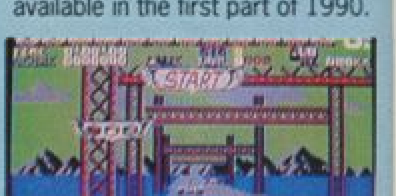
ACE's advice is to take heart as a whole range of console racers is in the Japanese pipeline - and should hit these shores early in the new year.



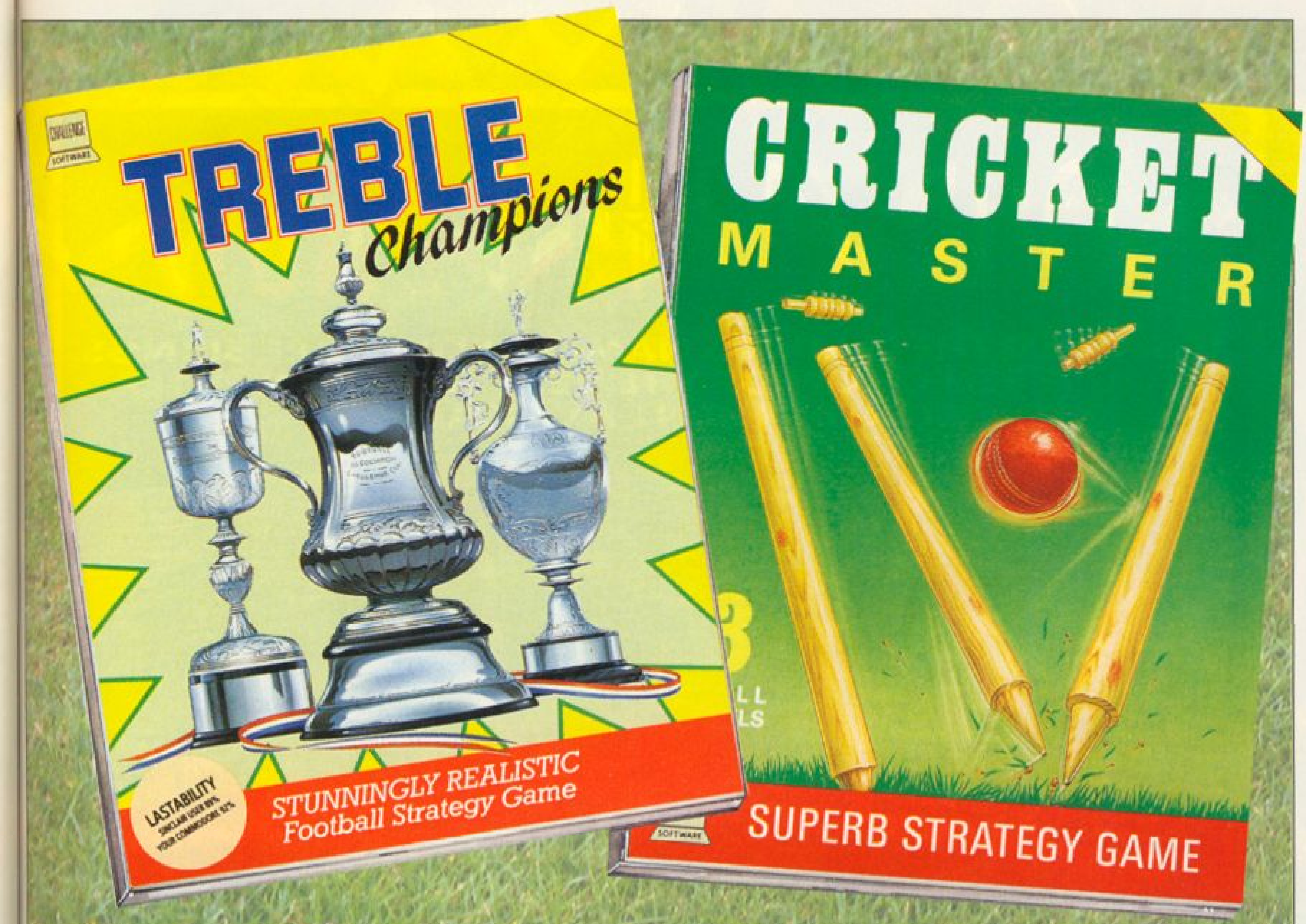
Turbo Outrun - shortly to appear on Sega Mega Drive.

Amongst the tiles on the way are *Out Run* for the PC Engine, *Turbo Out Run* for the Mega Drive, and *Power Drift* for the Sega Master System.

Nintendo racers are still thin on the ground - as are most Nintendo games – but this, too, should improve with the New Year. There are stacks of good racers in the Nintendo catalogue including *Road Blasters, Chase HQ, Super Sprint* and *Super Trux.* At least one of these should be available in the first part of 1990.



Power Drift for Sega shortly.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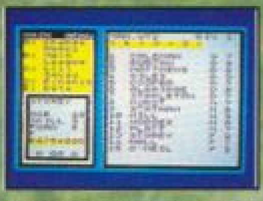
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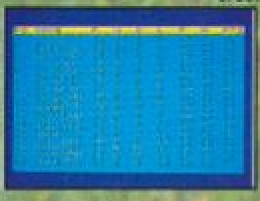
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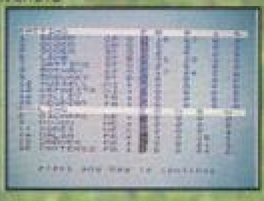
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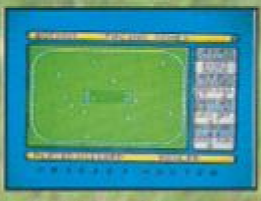
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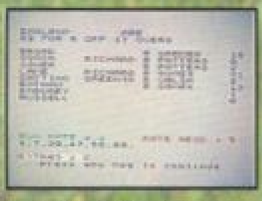
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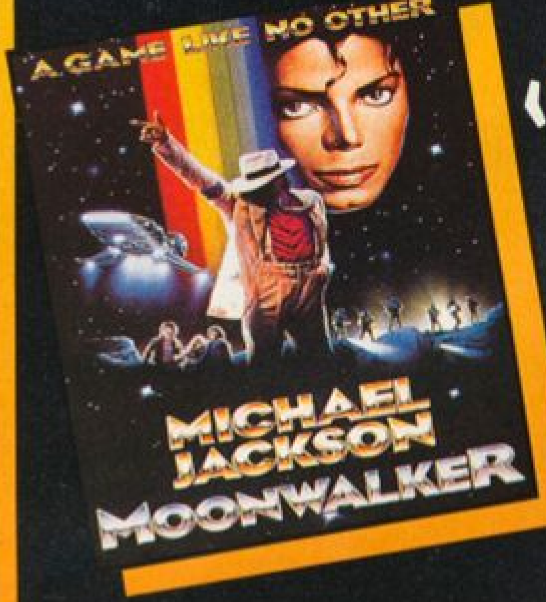

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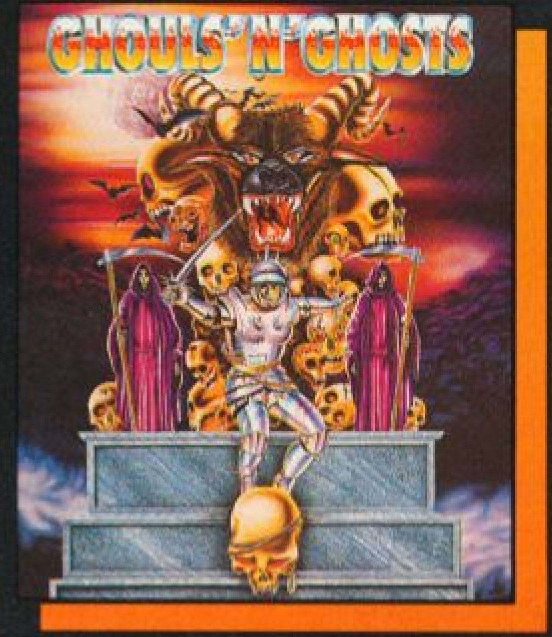

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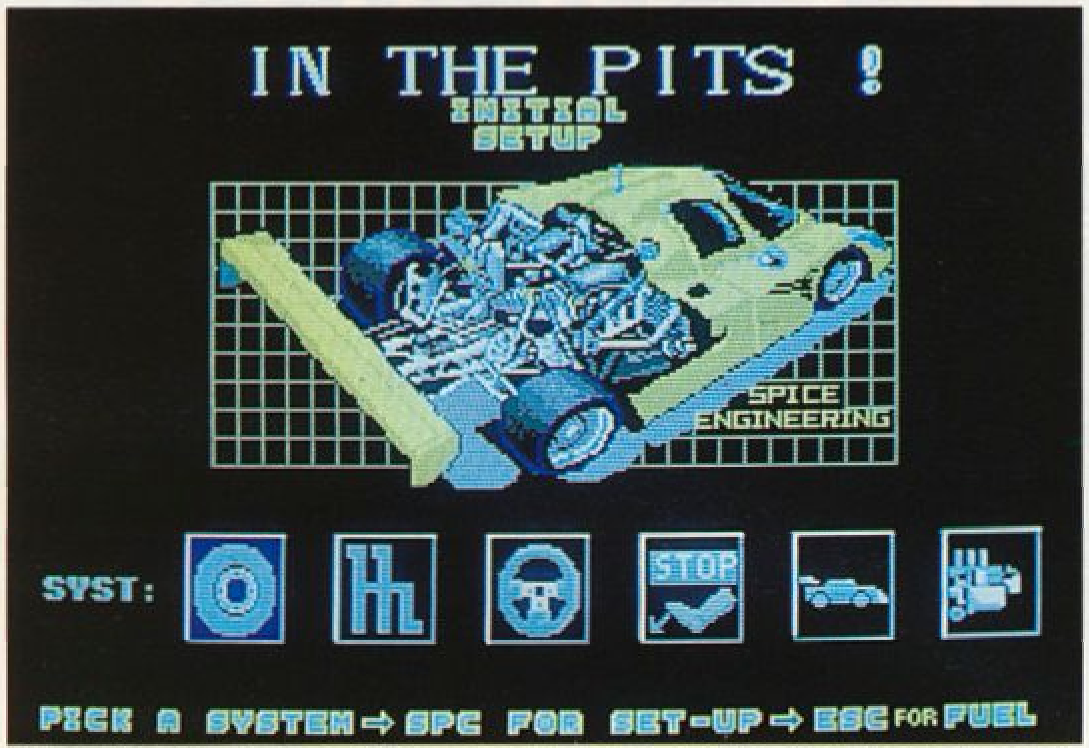
FAST LANE

Artronic speed into the competitive world of racing simulations



Better than your average pit-stop. You can change anything up to the angle of your spoilers - impressive!

RACING games have been popular, it seems, right from misty beginnings of video game technology. Pole position was probably the first really successful racing game to hit the arcades, and soon spawned a plethora of clones, both in the arcades and on home computer formats. Early efforts on micros, like Psion's *Chequered Flag*, were graphically very primitive with fairly simple gameplay. That is, you had a single car, a selection of tracks which were more or less the right shape, and not a lot else. The novelty was in having a 3D display, crude as it was.

Over the following years, many more racing simulations were to emerge. Slowly improvements were made to the simple effect achieved by *Chequered Flag*. Other cars were added, the background graphics and sprites were improved, and the handling of the car made more realistic. Now we are at the stage where, in terms of presentation and realism, the actual race itself has come about as far as it can given the constraints of existing technology.

So what's the next step? Well, Mandarin showed the way here. Motor Racing is about far more than just the race itself. There is the preparation of the car, briefing the driver, organising pit stops, and countless other considerations necessary for successful racing. *Lombard Rally* went some way towards including these factors, in addition to superb graphics and realistic car handling.

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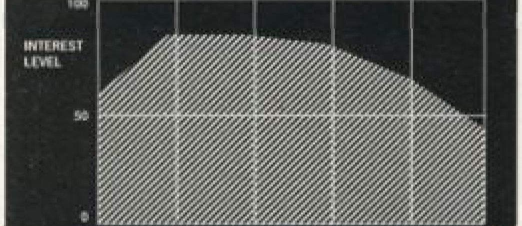
ATARI ST VERSION

The graphics are quite nice on the whole, although the roadside objects and other cars can sometimes look a bit wierd. Sound, other than a fairly nice piece of title music, is restricted to the usual engine and crashing sound effects, but these are done quite well.

GRAPHICS	**8**	**IQ FACTOR**	**6**
AUDIO	**7**	**FUN FACTOR**	**7**

ACE RATING 715

PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE



While this is not the most spectacular racing sim to hit the streets, if you take to it initially you will probably keep coming back to it for some time.

Artronic are now giving the same treatment to Group C driving. The game is based around the Spice Engineering Team. The car you are driving is their SE89C Cosworth powered C1 racing car. All of the elements you expect from a game of this type are here. The graphics are fairly smooth and fast, and do manage to give an impression of speed. My only gripe on the graphics front is that the roadside objects and other cars are not that convincing.

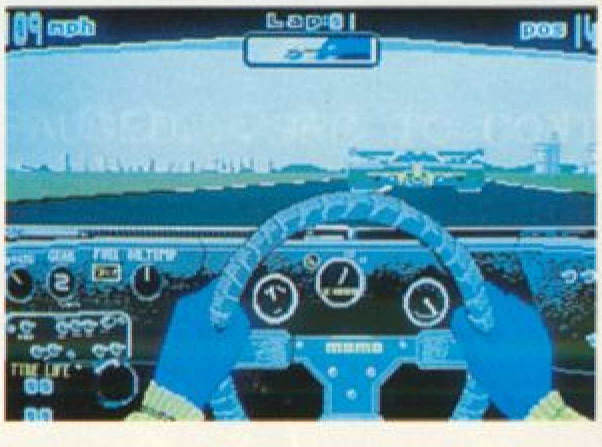
As far as handling is concerned, the simulation is reasonably realistic. You can almost feel the engine complaining if you try to overwork it at low gears. The car will also stall in certain circumstances. You certainly can't get round any of the courses by slamming your foot (or finger) down and hurtling round the whole thing in top gear, no matter how deft you are with a joystick. Try this and you'll only end up coming off the road at the first sharp corner, and that is a bone shuddering experience, I can tell you. Unlike a lot of inferior simulations you really need to think as you drive, just as you would do with the real thing. It will take you at least three or four laps of each circuit before you have got the bends just right.

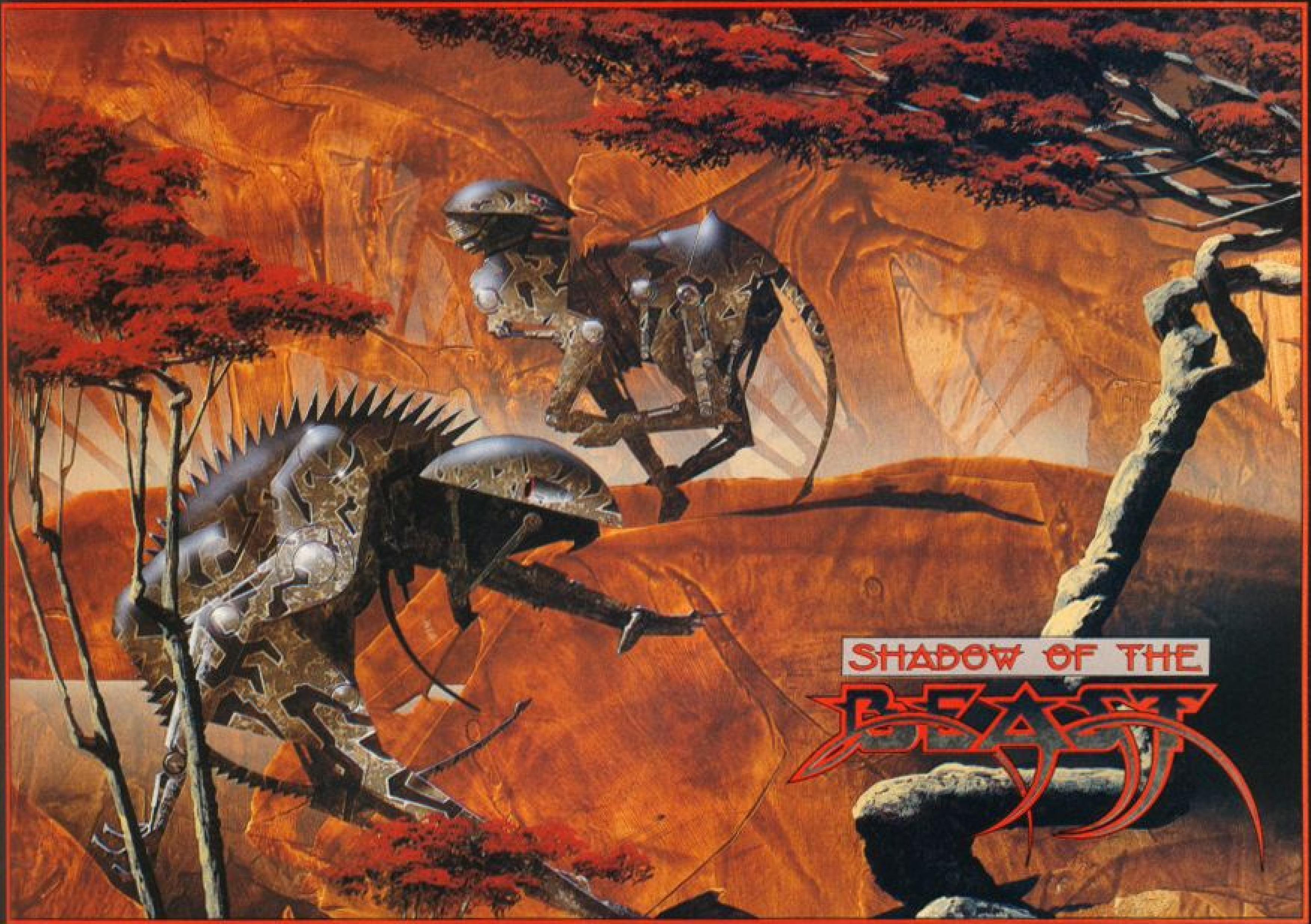
Your ultimate aim is to compete in, and win the world championship. Before you do that you can do practise laps for each of the available circuits. One very nice feature when you are practising is that you can't just go. You have to perform the correct starting up procedure first. This means switching on the electrics, the ignition, and so on. Then you can fire up the starter motor, put the car in gear and move off.

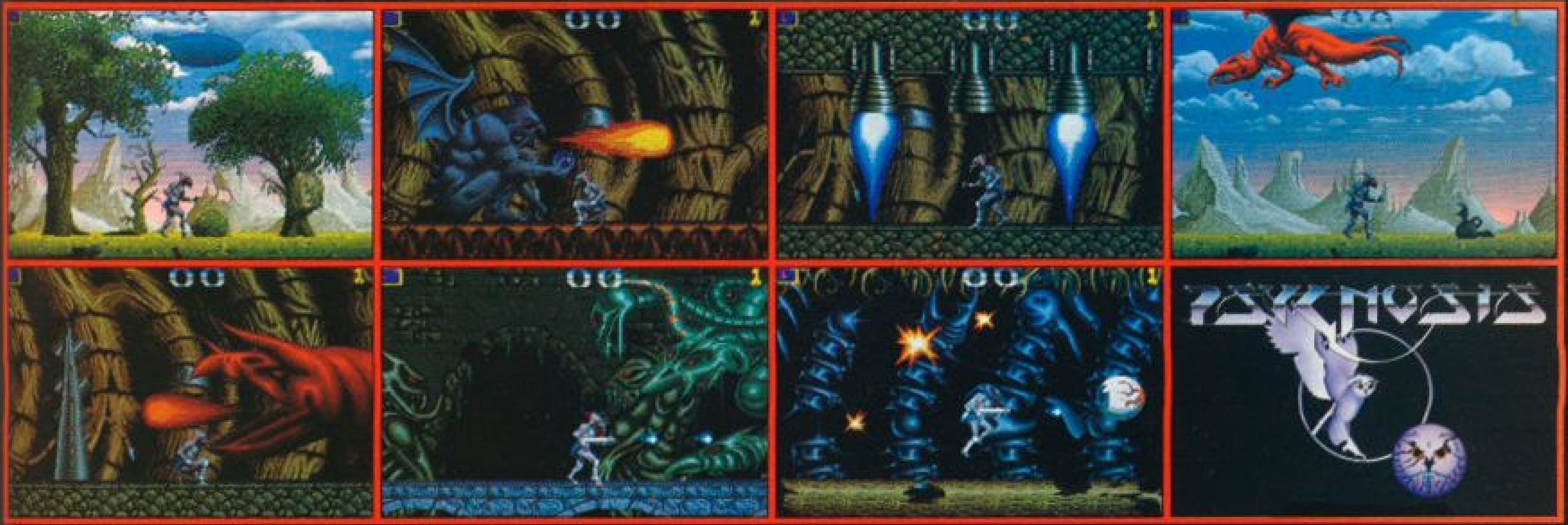
The other area in which **Fast Lane** has a little more than any run-of-the-mill racing game is in the pre-race preparation and pit stops. You have complete freedom to set up your car, from tyres to spoilers. It is very necessary to spend some time at this since the driving conditions can change quite drastically. You may be driving at night, or in pouring rain. These will obviously require a different mechanical setting to that needed for driving in the middle of the day in hot, dry conditions.

Undoubtedly *Fast Lane* has many superior features, and these will appeal to racing enthusiasts. In essence, however, the game does not really score much over some of the other driving simulations to appear recently. Do give it a try though — it could well be your cup of tea.

● Laurence Scotford







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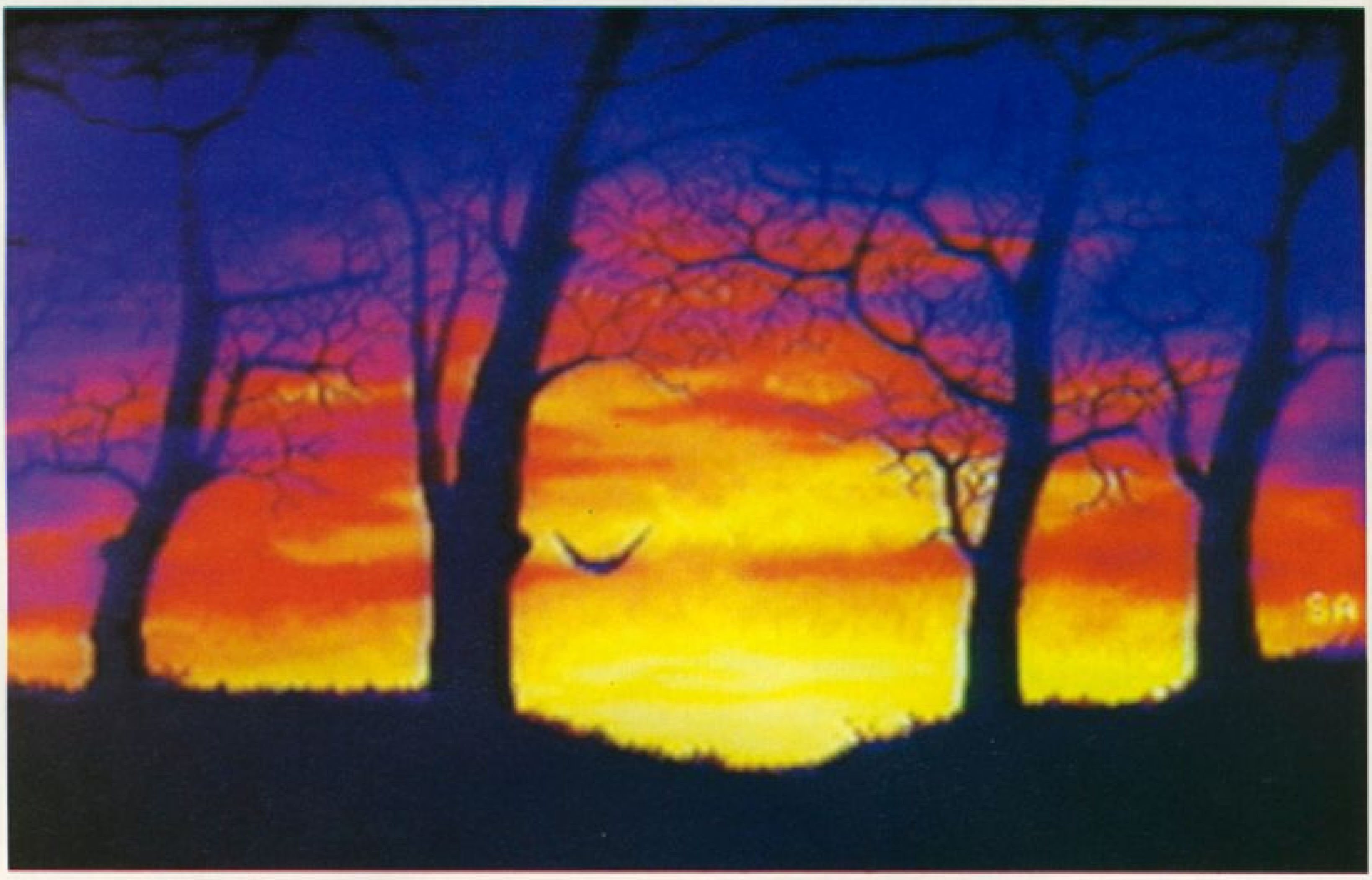


FANTAVISION

DOMARK/BRODERBUND get animated.

FANTAVISION aims to take the hassle out animation by doing most of the hard work for you. Simply by drawing a character in one frame, and then drawing it in either a different position or pose in the next, the program will supply the in-between stages required to create a moving and animated sequence.

The program works on any Amiga, although the more memory available the more ambitious a project can be, and all graphic modes, including HAM, are supported. As the program is specifically designed to create the objects and characters in the foreground of an animated sequence, backgrounds should be drawn (or digitised) with a dedicated art package, and then imported. To this end *Fantavision* will accept any standard .IFF or ILBM picture file.

POINTED OBJECTS

The objects being created and animated in the foreground are made up from points, with lines connecting them. The more points an object has , the smoother and more complex it appears on screen. Even circles are simply a collection of points, the default being 18, which only become noticeable with quite large circles covering most of the screen. The default maximum number of points that an object can have is 64, though both those figures are only restricted by available memory and speed loss. Having enough memory to produce a 400 point object may be fine, but it isn't going to move quickly when *Fantavision* tries to animate it.

TOOLS OF THE TRADE

There are a number of tools to aid object creation, including a pencil, square, circle, knife, point inserter and bitmap creator. In order to finish an object, and fill it with the currently selected colour and fill pattern (there are 37), it is necessary to plot the final point in the same position as the first. This isn't particularly easy so the right mouse button, which undoes the previously plotted point, is frequently utilised. The bitmap creator icon allows for rectangular slices of pictures to be cut and stored as an object. However, an object created in this manner cannot be rotated or manipulated, but can merely have its position moved.

The most powerful tools are the rotate, zoom, and the 3-D rotate options. The latter can be used to rotate the object around a horizontal axis, thus giving the appearance of flipping the object end over end, or around a vertical axis to simulate the object turning away from the viewer, before turning completely back around again.

Unfortunately there is a small problem with these options in that any object so rotated becomes smaller, an anomaly caused by rotating a two dimensional object in three dimensions. Should an object be rotated from one frame to the next so that it appears edgeways on, that object in the second frame cannot be then rotated back again using the same tool. In order to get around this, it is necessary to copy the original object over to the third frame for fresh manipulation.

The final collection of tools allow objects to be leant either on the vertical or horizontal axis, squashed or stretched, and flipped back to front or upside down.

OBJECTS IN MOTION

Having created as many objects as required in the first frame of a Fantavision film the next step is to move and manipulate them all in the second. Rather than having to copy all the objects across, the program allows entire frames to be cloned. Then all that needs to be done is to add or take away points from objects, and to move them to their new positions. New objects can be introduced at any point, and old ones can be deleted, or even made part of the background. Objects moving across the background do not disturb it, but should that background be a HAM image then very strange colour smearing effects are noticeable inside an object as it is animated.
It is the number of in-between stages, supplied

by the program, which determines the apparent smoothness of the animation. The default number is 16 but this can be upped to a maximum of 128. If a high number is selected, and there are a lot objects, each with a sizeable number of points then it is usually necessary to increase the speed of the animation from 25% to anything up to 400%.

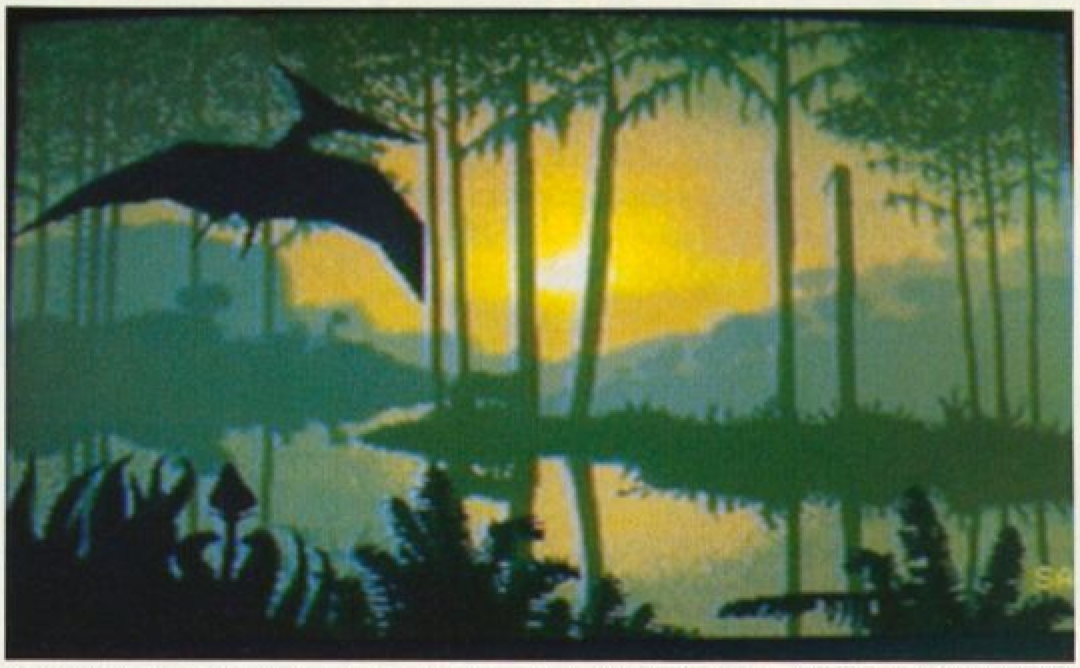
There are four styles of animation which govern what the film will look like when running. The first is Normal mode, which simply erases an object from one position, restores the background, then redraws the object at the next. This is the default for all frames, but can be changed on any or all frames to one of the following: background, lightning and trace. Background as mentioned earlier is used to make an object become part of the background and thus not affected by any of the other objects or any special effects. Lightning simply causes the object to flash as it is moved, and is most effective when the object has a different colour border than the fill colour, and the animation speed is slow. Finally trace mode does not erase an object at all when animating it, thus leaving a trail behind it. If a subsequent frame then is set to normal mode all the trail shapes will be removed, leaving only the object in its final position.

COLOURS

Each frame has its own associated palette of 32 colours which can be modified independently of all the others, or globally if so desired. Each colour can be redefined individually, or the overall brightness of the whole palette can increased or decreased quite easily. Colours can be swapped around, copied, or a range of shades can be produced by nominating the start and finish colours. Any changes to the palette can be undone if they go drastically wrong, and if wholesale changes prove unsuitable then the entire palette can be changed back to its default settings instantly. Naturally any palette can be copied and pasted onto any other frame within the film.

SOUNDS INTERESTING

Of course it wouldn't be much of a cinematic spectacular if there was no sound, though



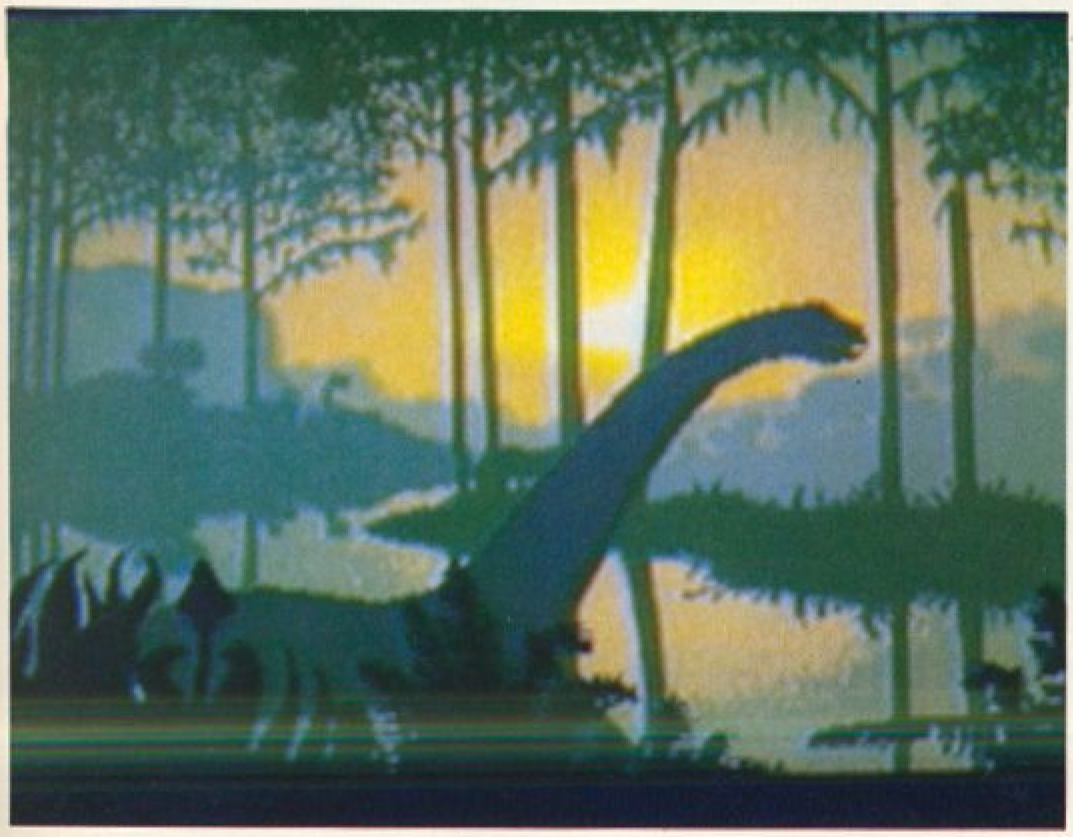
some might argue the case for the silent cinema. Fantavision does not provide anything in the manner of programming the sound chip to produce effects or facilitating arranging notes to produce music. Rather, it offers two channels of sampled sound (standard .IFF format) per frame.

There are a number of examples on the Fantavision disk, which can be loaded and experimented with using the volume, balance, echo, pitch and duration sliders. Just one basic sample can be made to sound quite different in a number of frames simply by introducing an echo and altering the pitch. Any sound can be test played to see whether it is what you want, and if not it can be removed from memory.

Once a sound effect meets requirements adding it to the film is simplicity itself. Go to the right frame and click on Sound from the Film menu, then on the OK gadget.

THE WRITTEN WORD

Undoubtedly the single most disappointing aspect of Fantavision is the manner in which it handles text. There are only four fonts, of which only two are really usable, and there is no option to design any more. However, fonts designed with other packages can be loaded in. Text is produced by creating a box, and then writing inside it. The standard alterations to the typeface, such as bold, italics, and underline can be used, but they affect all the text with in the box, rather than just specific line. Worse still is that the most powerful tools in the Fantavision locker, the rotate, squeeze, stretch and flip options simply resize the actual text box. The text inside is not altered in any manner, but reformatted so that it fits within the new box.



THE GOOD, THE BAD AND THE SLOPPY

The smoothness and speed of animation in a Fantavision movie are very impressive, as are the object manipulation tools, and the program only really starts to falter when dealing with text. The mouse control is a little sloppy when using the colour palette, and it is very easy to make a mistake when creating an object. Thankfully it is nearly as easy to correct those mistakes.

While Fantavision certainly can't let you produce the Last Starfighter on your Amiga, it does have many other applications and gives a thorough grounding in the basic techniques of animation.

● Duncan Evans

TURN TO THE PINKS...

For an explanation of animation techniques, consult this month's Pink Pages.

RELEASE BOX

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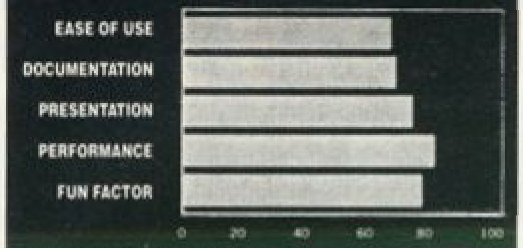
ACE UTILITY RATING



Fun to use with powerful features, marred by annoying shortcomings

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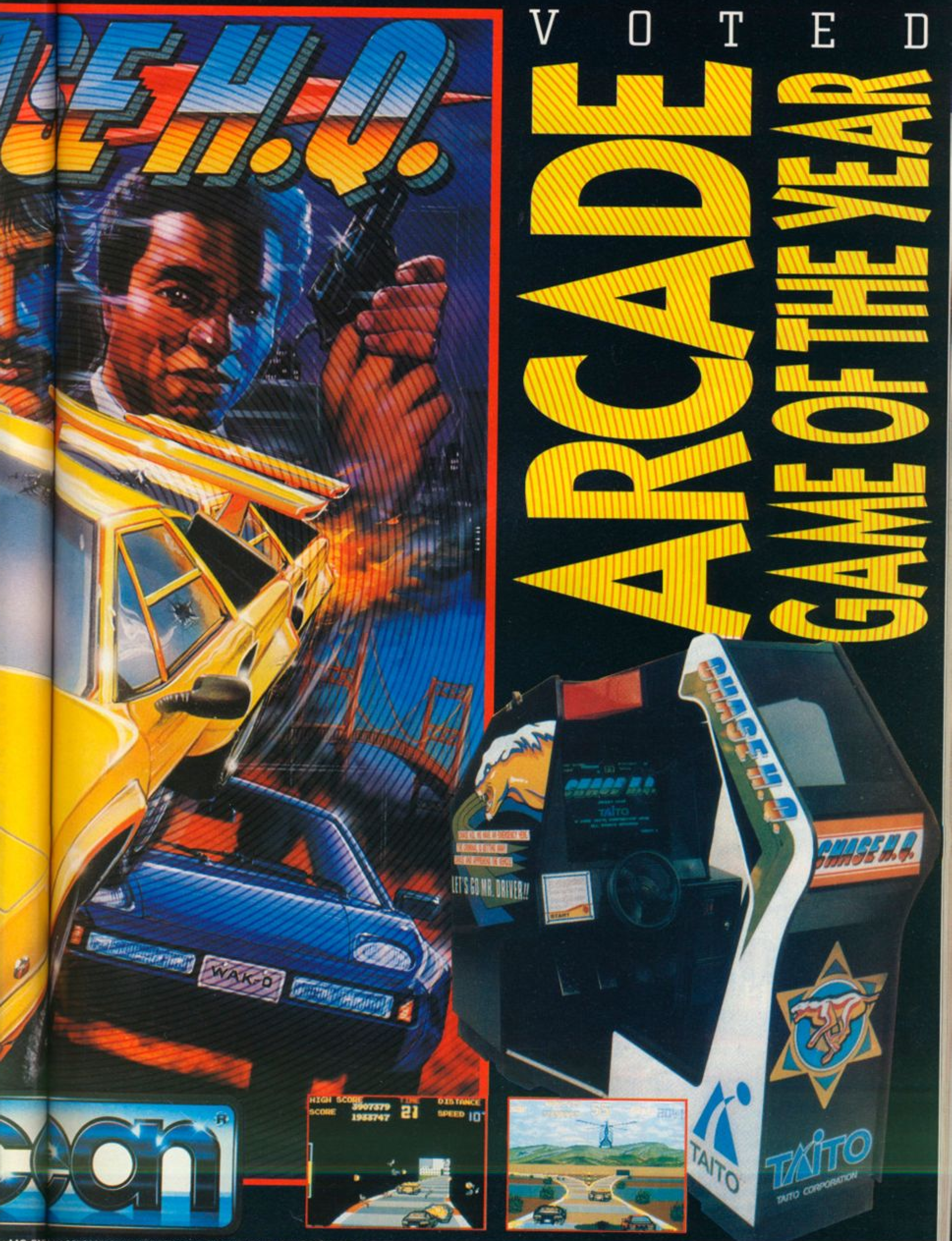
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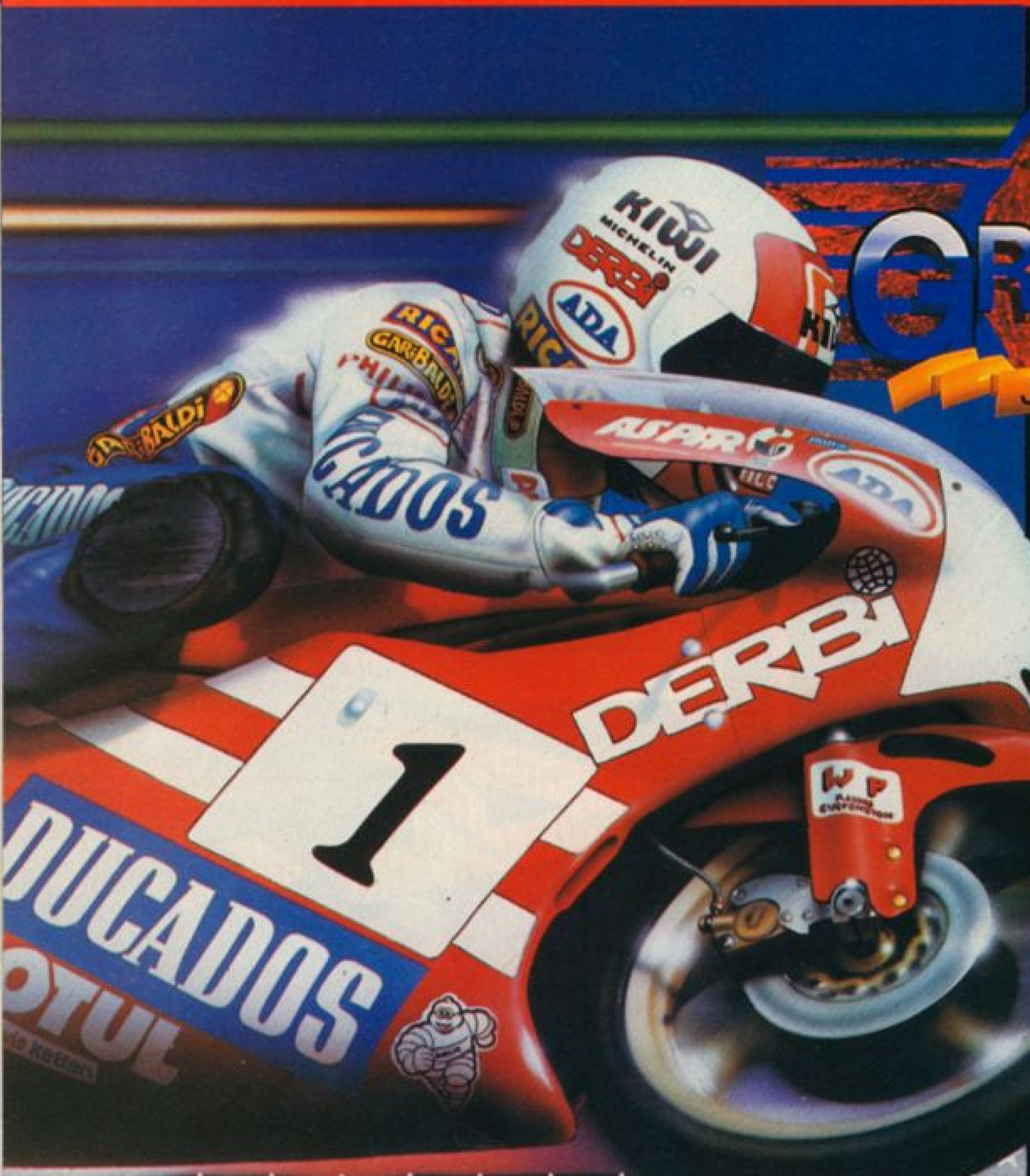

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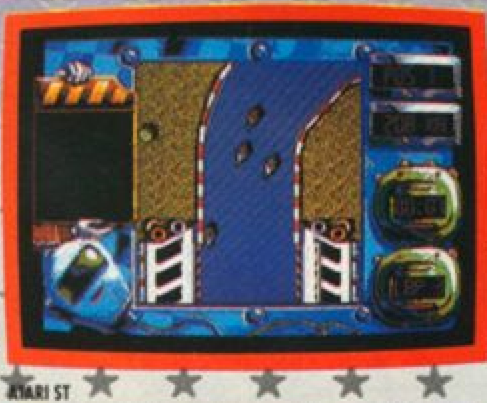
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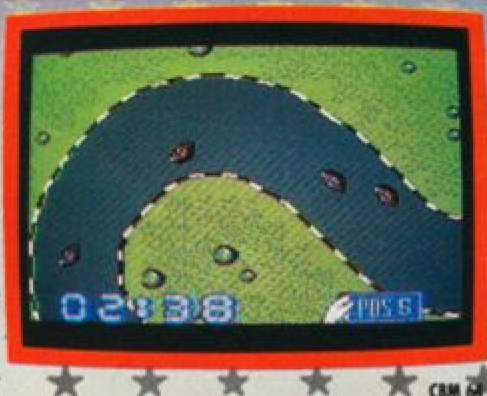
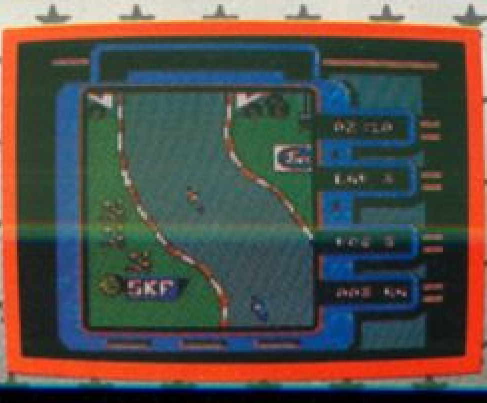
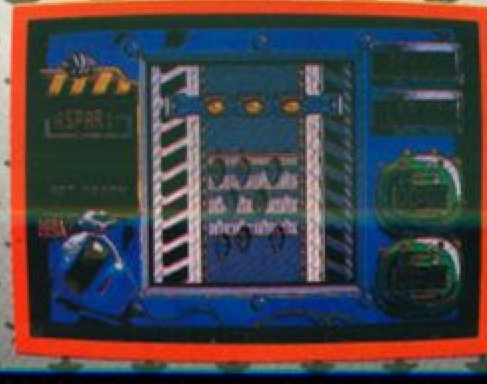


CBM 64





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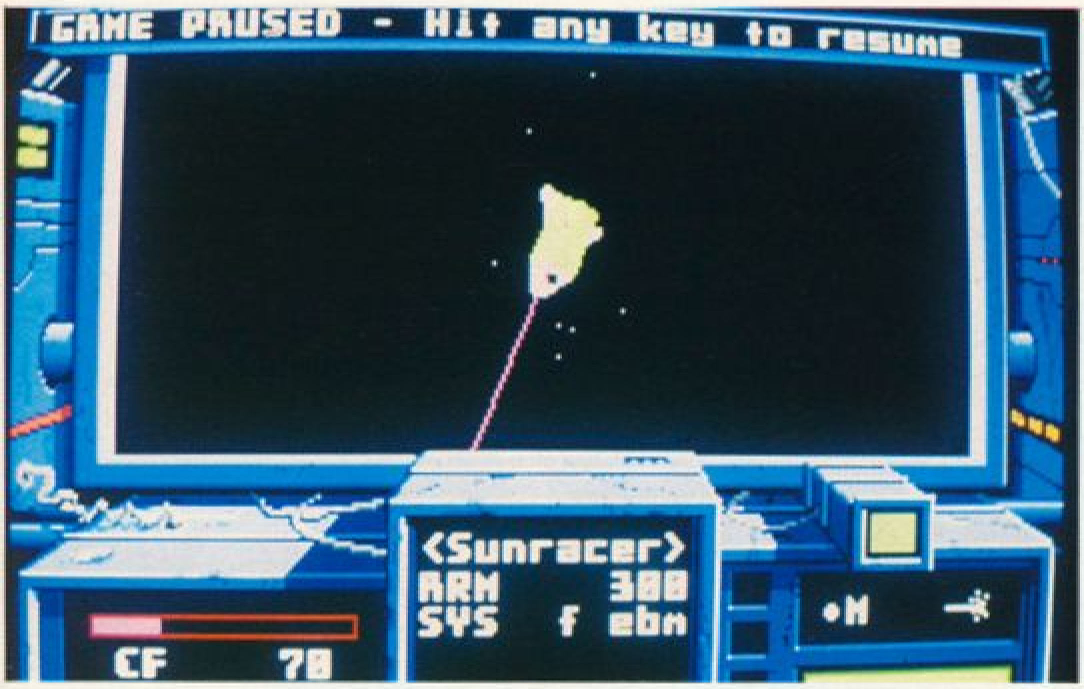


GAME PAUSED - Hit any key to resume

Your ship twists through empty space, but you won't be alone for long. This is as good a time as any to test your strength and practise a few laser volleys.

SPACE ROGUE

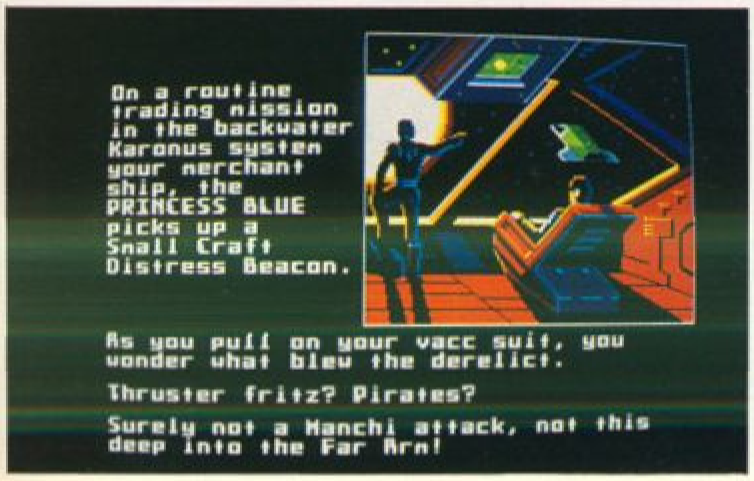
ORIGIN boldly goes...

MALIR Gates are like Interstellar Channel Tunnels, they hang in Space waiting to catapult daring travellers across vast pan-galactic distances within a matter of seconds. Near the entrance to such a gate, a Cadet on EVA moves away from the merchant craft Princess Blue towards a curiously abandoned scout vessel. Suddenly... alarmingly... a swarm of the human race's worst enemies - the Manchi - arrive. They atomise the Princess Blue before leaving without so much as a "Sorry about the mess". With nowhere else to go, the Cadet enters the scout ship. All systems seem to work. Swearing to avenge the destruction of the Princess Blue, the Cadet commandeers the ship and becomes a "Space Rogue"...

...Which isn't the exciting life it's cracked up to be. Naive ideas that being a Space Rogue means swooping daringly around other ships and pulverising them with weapons of incredible force soon fade away. It transpires that the title brings with it a life of journeying to space stations, mining rigs and distant outputs to explore and solve puzzles.

Exploration is in the classic *Ultima* style. You move in a Gauntlet-esque fashion between rooms; encountering doors, objects, arcade machines (displaying "Hive", a game within this game, like *Space Quest III's* "Space Chickens") and people. These people are vital to the game, you have to talk to them to gain any help at all. In the right way at that, or you could blow chances of riches, help or indispensable information. Being open and frank means you get sucked into missions such as bribe delivery, helping rogue androids, or undertaking to raid a merchant ship to get pally with pirates. Actually, you do get to do a bit of pulverising. If you switch from the navigation computer (which shows the area you are in as a 2D grid with each square containing a symbol to show its contents), the view changes to that of your surroundings, displayed using filled 3D vector graphics. This view is used to dock with space-stations, and also for skirmishes with other craft. As you lock onto another ship, guides appear to show which way to turn to get them in your sights. You soon discover that to transform anything into space debris requires more firepower than your standard laser can offer. Plasma bombs, heat-seeking missiles, nuclear missiles (!), or improved lasers can all be bought (for a price, of course) from all good space stations.

The 3D view is also required for travel between Malir gates. Having approached the tube-like gate correctly, space disappears, replaced by a seemingly endless succession of circles which weave their way into the distance. Not passing squarely through a circle (!) means a gradual loss of shield power which will have the same eventual effect as being hit by a very big missile... it's so easy to die in space.



On a routine trading mission in the backwater Karonus system your merchant ship, the PRINCESS BLUE picks up a Small Craft Distress Beacon.

As you pull on your vacc suit, you wonder what blew the derelict.

Thruster fritz? Pirates?

Surely not a Manchi attack, not this deep into the Far Arm!

Oh dear, looks like there's something very sinsiter going on...

RELEASE BOX		
ATARI ST	£29.99dk	December
AMIGA	£29.99dk	December
C64	£19.99dk	IMMINENT
IBM PC	£29.99dk	OUT NOW

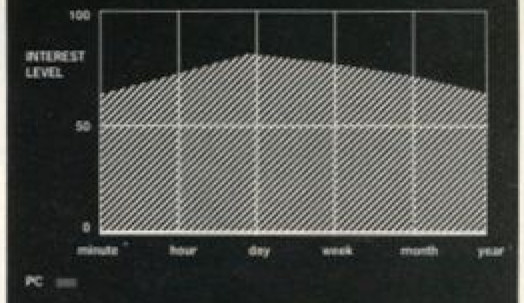
PC VERSION

The colourful and rapid flight and exploration graphics add to the lure of this interesting game. Sound, though, is sparse but this is a peripheral point as you delve deeper into the game's mysteries.

GRAPHICS	**8**	**IQ FACTOR**	**8**
AUDIO	**4**	**FUN FACTOR**	**7**

ACE RATING 765

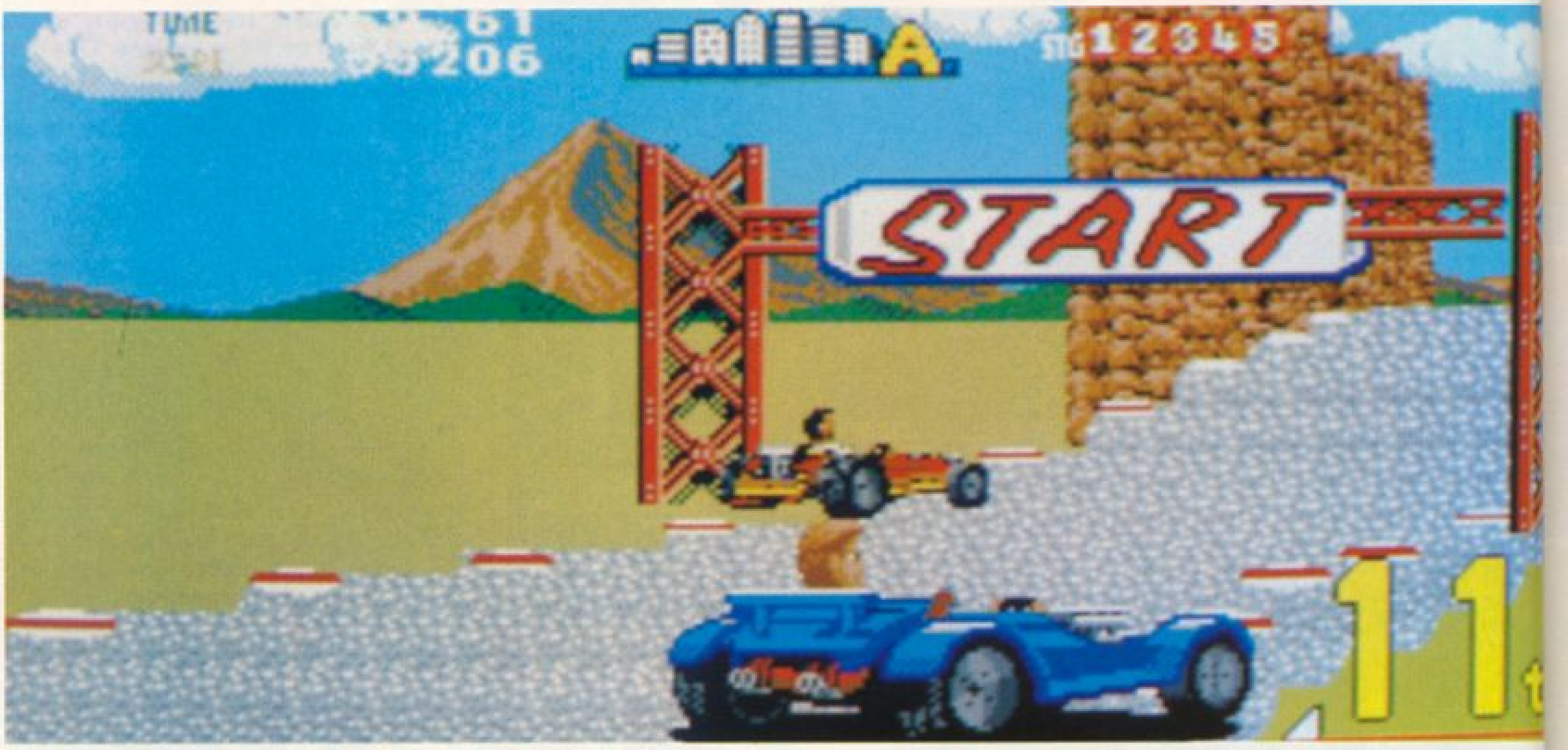
PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE



An initially awkward game which will soon hold you in its web of intrigue.

Don't you just know it's time to cancel social engagements when you get an Origin game and wade through the box's contents. A novella, catalogue, key guide, ship reference card, warranty card, arcade game advert, poster, owner's guide... you can imagine the glint in the eyes of the lumberjacks as they shouted "Pass the Chainsaw" and chopped down another forest for Origin's use (little bit of politics, my name's Jeffrey Davey, thank you and goodnight). But I forgive their destruction of woodland because it's a good game. Whilst it starts off confusing, gradually more and more things pop up to interest the player. OK, so space combat has been done before but this is enjoyably varied with extra weapons, great graphics and innovative touches. You can even see other ships dog-fighting and, as you manoeuvre, view your ship from an out-of-cockpit perspective, neat!

● Jeffrey Davy



POWER

ACTIVISION go for Xmas pole position

MAJOR end of year conversions are something of a speciality for Chris Butler. The long serving 8 bit programmer has been responsible for producing home computer releases of arcade games around Christmas before with Thunderblade last year, and, in the past, *Space Harrier* and *720*.

Butler's work has some hallmarks, and one of the most notable of these is his ability to produce very fast scrolling and that's obviously a recommendation for a race game like Power Drift.

Whether *Power Drift* can be a major Christmas contender is less clear. The game was undoubtedly a success in the arcades, but I'm not sure why. Compared to other race games released this year like *Monaco GP*, *Hard Drivin* and Namco's *Winning Streak* though, it's not in the same class for graphics, sound or realism. Nevertheless in the past average arcade games have made excellent conversions and topped the charts. *Combat School* comes to mind.

Where *Power Drift* does have an edge, is in the format of its game design. It's a fun game, rather than a no-nonsense grand prix racer, with a cast of wacky characters charging around a course which is a mixture of off-road racing and fun park roller coasting.

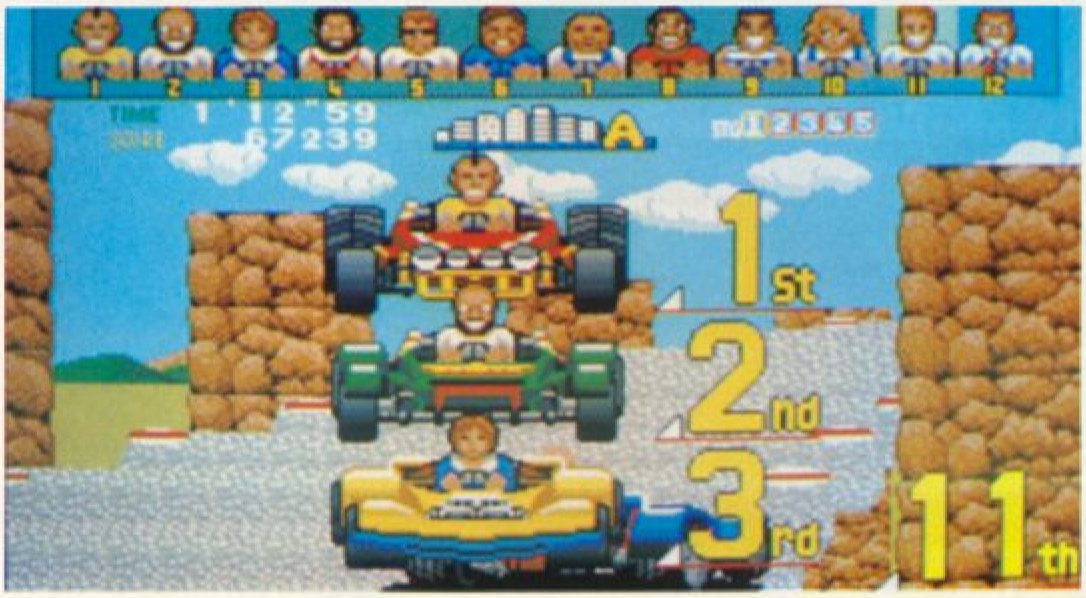
The idea is to complete five courses, each of five stages, composed of four laps. There's a field of twelve to battle it out with and to qualify you'll have to finish in the top three to continue on in the game. That's it.

One major plus in favour of this conversion is that it all loads in one go, so there's no delay while you wait for extra courses to appear, or worse still, fail to appear when the game crashes. There is a price for this and that's in the omission of the bonus track. Elsewhere everything points to another competent piece of programming. The game certainly moves quickly enough, with a reasonably smooth screen update and responsive controls and a well balanced challenge. The characters all have their own quirks and it's nice to see them gesturing offensively - the most attractive touch of the coin op - when they pass a competitor.

There's no mistaking Chris Butler's style, and there's no mistaking his graphics, largely constructed of character blocks, which give the game a square look. There's also a lack of colour that makes it a little drab looking. Sound is competent, but offers little in aural interest with no samples or speech from the coin-op.

Power Drift is undoubtedly a competent conversion, but whether the licence is strong enough to make it a big seller is unclear. Certainly if you compare it to Microprose's Stunt Car (reviewed elsewhere this issue) it doesn't compete as a purist's racing game. *I know* which I'd rather play.

● Mike Pattenden



AMIGA VERSION

If the 64 conversion is competent and playable, then its 16 bit counterpart is the opposite. Graphically and sonically its all you could want, but as a piece of programming it's a dog's dinner. The challenge rapidly dissipates when you realise the game is unplayable in places. At certain points the track just becomes a mess, leaving you to wonder which way to turn. The result is confusion and lost time. Take it away from me.

GRAPHICS 8 **IQ FACTOR** 4
AUDIO 8 **FUN FACTOR** 6

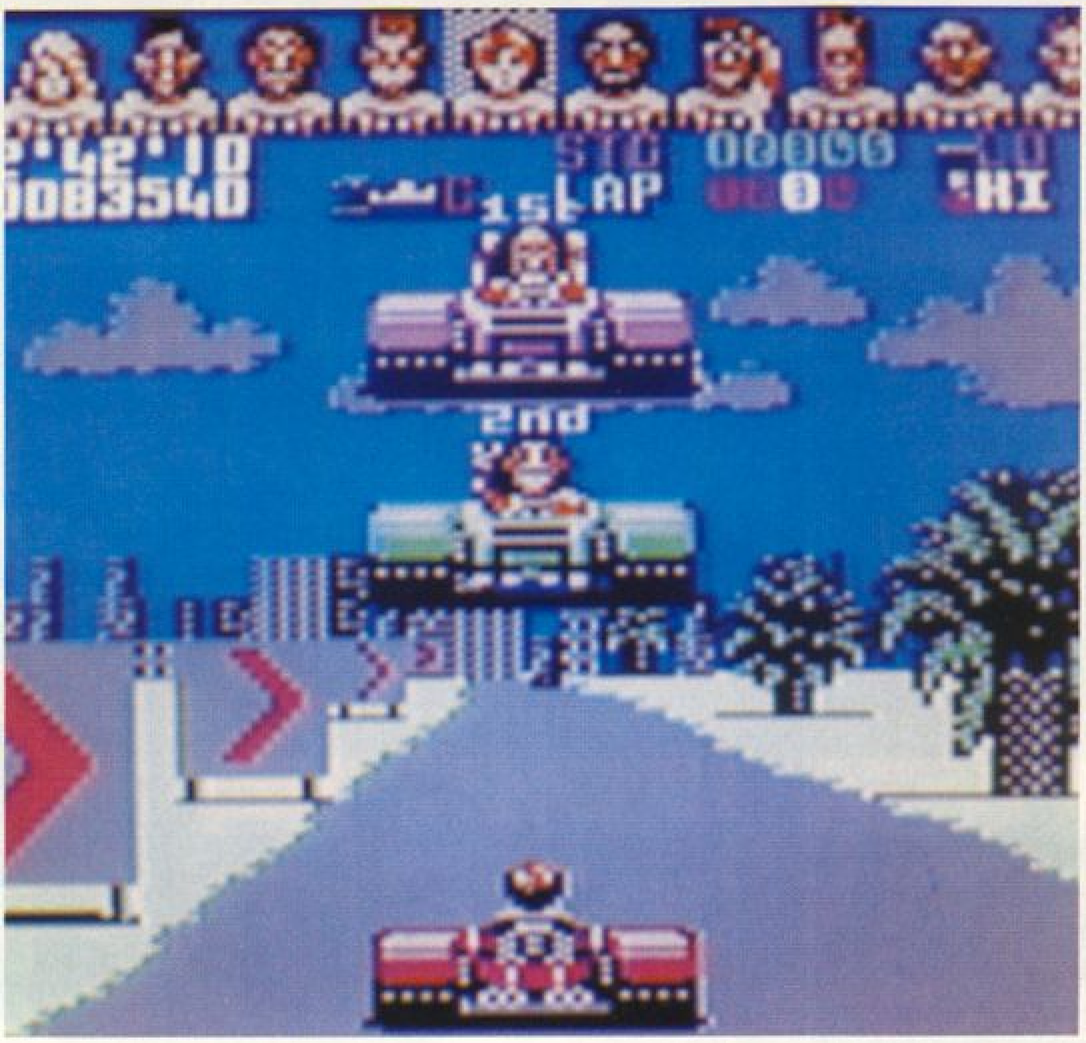
ACE RATING 645

C64 VERSION

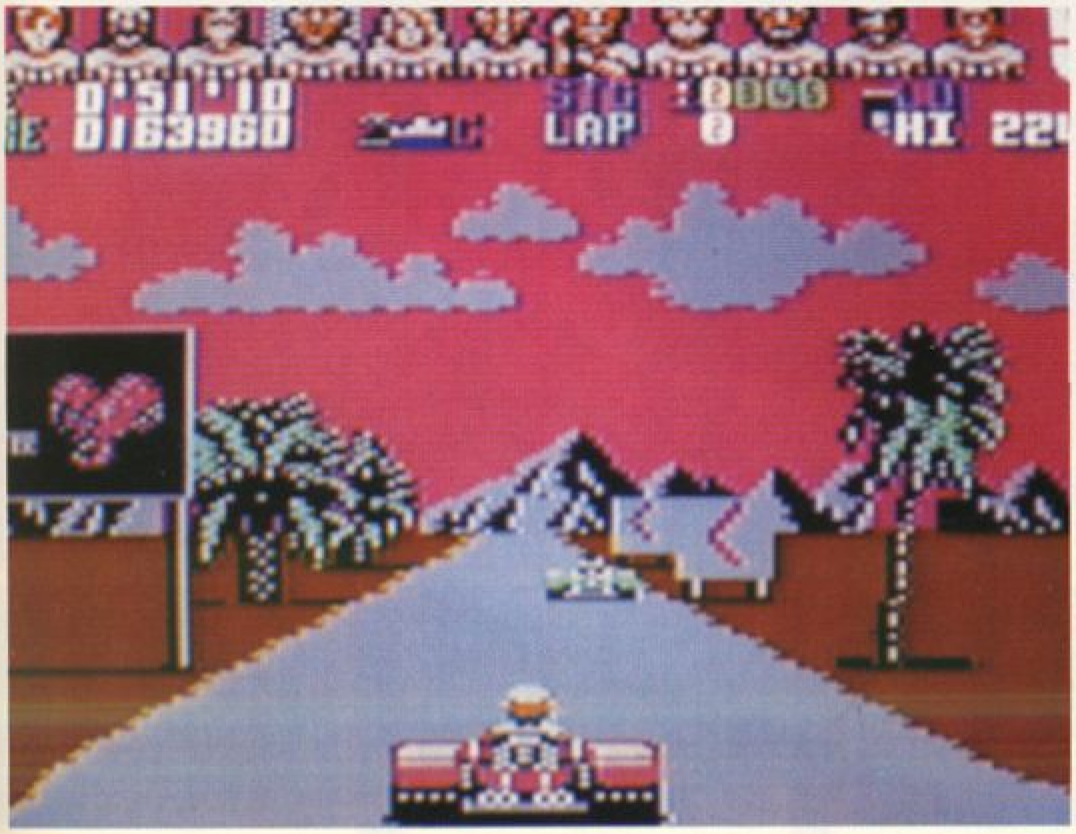
More of an interpretation of the original coin-op than a direct conversion attempt. This pays dividends in the gameplay as the road layouts are far more playable – particularly the absence of the crossovers. Graphics and sound are also more basic but again the plain grey tracks are more convincing than the attempt on the Amiga version to emulate the coin-op tracks with all their detail. Animation is competent in the C64 version – making for an absorbing race game.

GRAPHICS 8 **IQ FACTOR** 4
AUDIO 8 **FUN FACTOR** 8

ACE RATING 725



DRIFT



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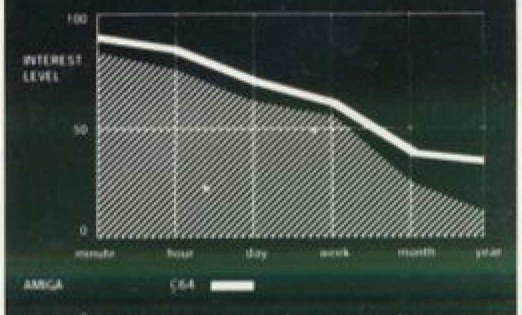

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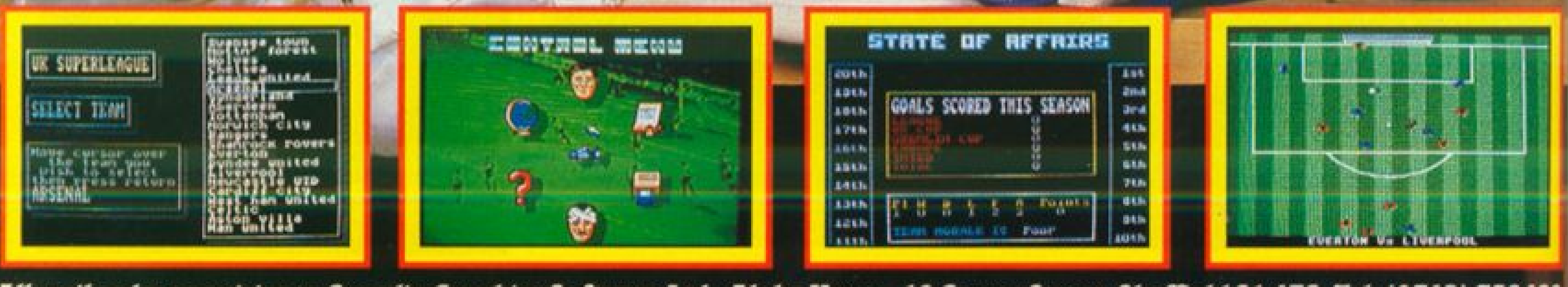
UK SUPERLEAGUE
SELECT TEAM
ARSENAL
CONTROL MENU
STATE OF AFFAIRS
GOALS SCORED THIS SEASON
TEAM MORALE IS Poor
EVERTON Vs LIVERPOOL

Move cursor over the team you wish to select then press return

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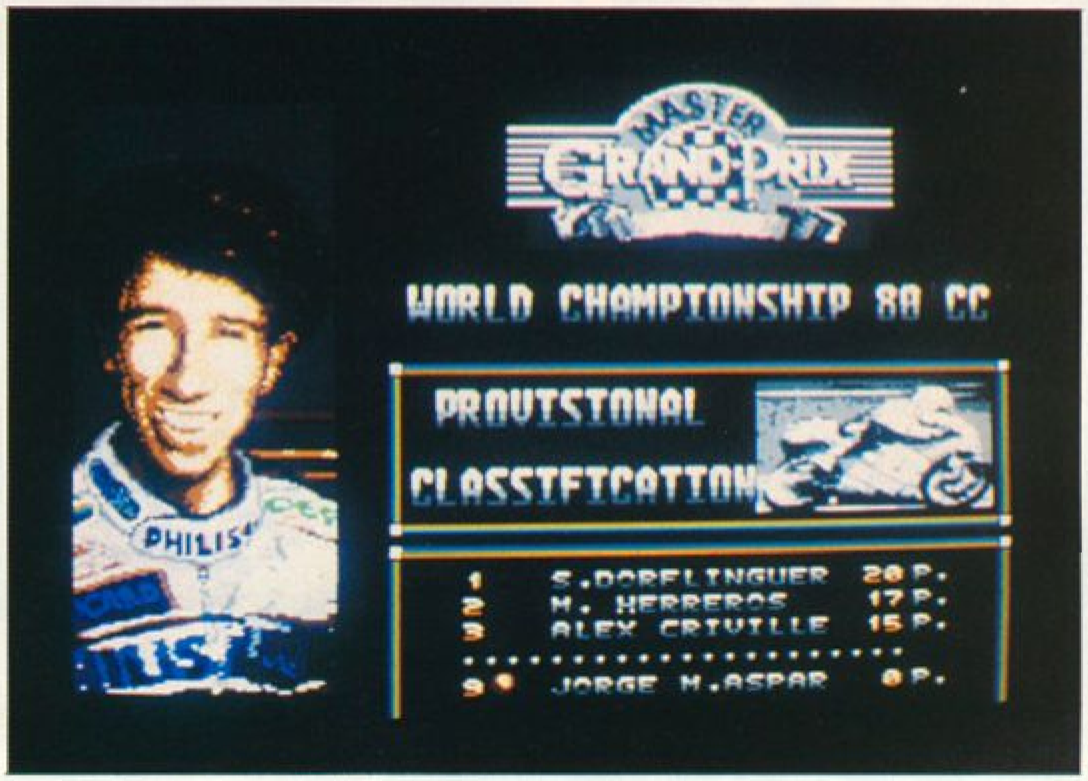
GRAND PRIX

On your bike DINAMIC

I don't know what he is smiling about, in the racing game of the year stakes, this effort from Dinamic just fails to qualify!



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WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP 80 CC

PROVISIONAL
CLASSIFICATION

1      S.DORFLINGUER   20 P.
2      M. HERREROS     17 P.
3      ALEX CRIVILLE   15 P.
• • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • •
9º     JORGE M.ASPAR    0 P.
```

1989 will without doubt be remembered as the year of the race game - we've seen Continental Circus, Stunt Car Racer, Power Drift, RVF, Test Drive II, WEC Le Mans and Vette, and with Hard Drivin', Chase HQ and Turbo OutRun still to come, there's virtually no room left on the starting grid for yet another contender - or at least that's what it would seem...

Dinamic Software's effort is based on the 80cc Motorcycling World Championship, and comes approved by Jorge Martinez 'Aspar', four times World Champion. Your aim is to follow in Aspar's tyre tracks and win the Championship.

Grand Prix Master's most noticable innovation is the use of a scrolling plan view a la Hot Rod to portray the action, as opposed to the more familiar first and second person perspectives. There are seven tracks to race over, all of them supposedly faithful recreations of the real things.

Before going into the Championship head first, players can opt to take a spin round the tracks in a warm-up lap or take in an aerial preview of the track before taking part in a compulsory qualification round from which the slowest 4 of the 12 racers are eliminated. Then follows the race proper, and if you emerge from that victorious, you go on to the next circuit...and the next...and the next. A status panel provides all the relevant race data including speed, current position and remaining laps.

As in real Grand Prix racing, wins and positions are converted into points that are accumulated on a master scoreboard to form a racer's 'league' - the highest points scorer at the end of the tournament gets to soak everyone with Champagne.

Grand Prix Master lacks the one thing that makes or breaks a racing game - any feeling of speed or exhiliration. The 'action' crawls along at a snail's pace (that is, when you're not struggling with the control mode) and the lack of any sound effects in favour of an unsuitable in-game tune doesn't help matters. With so many excellent racing games currently on the circuit, there's no need to have to resort to this sub-standard effort.

● Gary Whitta

AMSTRAD VERSION

Grand Prix Master is spoiled by sloppy execution - the scrolling is jerky to the point of being distracting (a flaw which is inexcusable on the ST and Amiga) and the control mode is so fiddly just staying on the track is a tiresome and frustrating job. To cap it all the graphics are too small and poorly defined - it takes a while just to work out which way round the bike is facing! With so many excellent racing games currently on the circuit, there's no need to have to resort to this sub-standard effort.

GRAPHICS	**4**	**IQ FACTOR**	**2**
AUDIO	**3**	**FUN FACTOR**	**3**

ACE RATING 423

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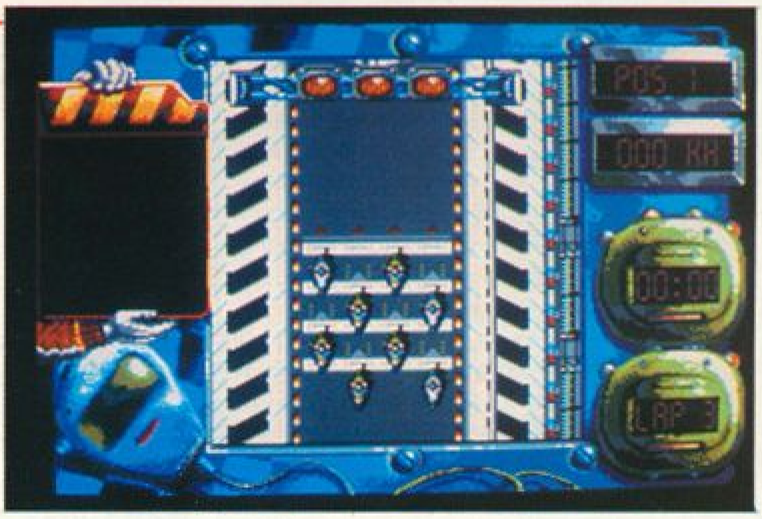
The riders are lined up on the starting grid, the crowd are waiting, the pit crews are ready, and the tension is mounting... well, sort of!



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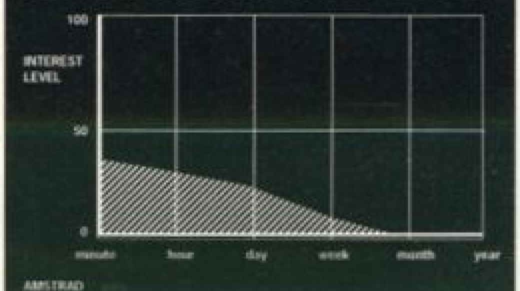
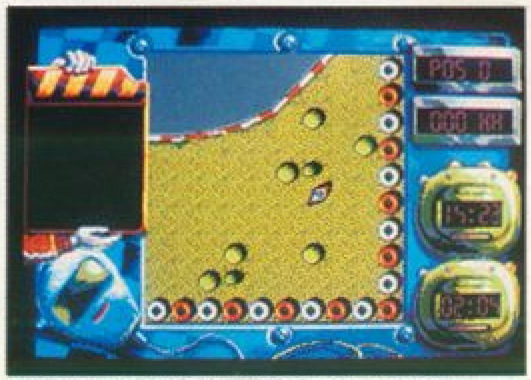
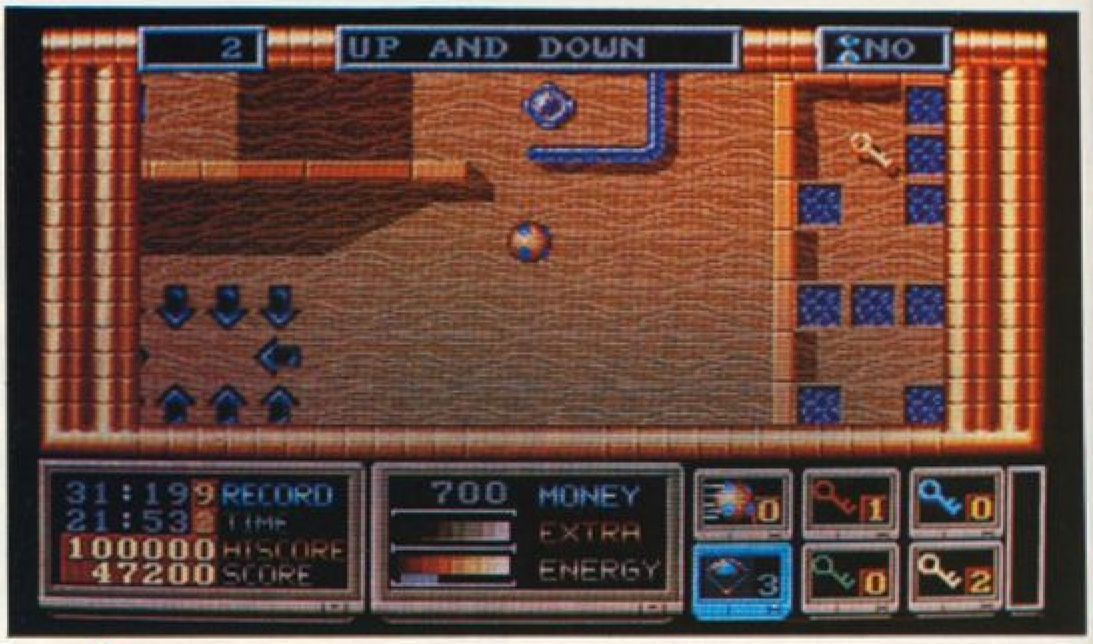


No point in driving down this slope – you can walk it just as easily.



Whoops! Those lousy controls again...

The ball admidst some of the many hazards to be found in *Rock 'n' Roll* from German games wizards, Rainbow Arts.



ROCK'N'ROLL

WARNING! If you like sleeping don't buy this game. If you want to ignore my advice then go right ahead, but don't blame me when you find yourself huddled over your keyboard at three o' clock in the morning, bleary eyes fixed on the screen, hand feverishly clutching the mouse... get the picture? Good, 'cos I assure you it will happen.

Rock 'n' Roll is one of the most brilliantly addictive games I have come across in a very long time. There are elements of many other games within it, but it manages to combine these to create a very distinctive flavour - one that you will take to instantly.

The game has you controlling a ball through a series of 32 levels. These are divided across 7 continents each of which has different features and peculiarities. If you remember Marble Madness you will have some idea of the way that the game works.

The mouse is used to control the ball. The speed with which you move the mouse affects the ball's speed and inertia, while the direction of movement, obviously enough, affects the heading of the ball. This actually works very well and, provided your mouse is clean and working properly, you will find the game extremely playable using this method of control. It wouldn't have been quite the same using a joystick - it remains to be seen how well the game will work on joystick only formats.

There is only one way to get through each level and it will take quite a bit of experimentation before you find it. Things aren't quite as simple as just rolling a little ball around a two dimensional surface since there are various objects to be negotiated. These take the form of magnets, which attract the ball, ventilators, which blow the ball away, arrows, which roll the ball in a specific direction and so on. As well as impeding your progress and generally making a nuisance of themselves, many of the objects will also drain your energy. Lose too much energy and your ball collapses miserably.

Will Rainbow Arts roll straight to the top slot?

The other aspect of the game world – which you will soon learn the hard way – is that it's built on a platform sitting high about a blue graphic sea which can be seen executing a very nice piece of parallax scrolling through occasional gaps in the landscape. Roll into one of these gaps and you plunge headlong to your death. Unless, that is, you happen to possess one or more little parachutes. Open these up before you hit the bottom and your ball will live to roll another day.

Parachutes are one of the many useful items you can pick up within the game world. Some of these will be essential if you are to complete the level. The handy goodies you can collect include the aforementioned parachutes, armour for your ball, coloured keys for accessing appropriately coloured doors, bombs, and so forth. The purpose of most of the items is self-explanatory, but you will still have to work out exactly when and where each of them should be put to use.

Nothing comes for free, however, so before you can collect any goodies you have to find some money to pay for them. This comes in the form of coins of various denominations left lying around on each level. Further reward comes in the shape of coloured diamonds which, when collected, give you bonus points, the value of which depend on the colour of the gem.

The ideas in *Rock 'n' Roll* are not exactly revolutionary, and if you have played lots of similar ball games then there might not be enough new elements here to hold your interest. My only other gripe is that the soundtrack, while being quite OK for a while, is a bit repetitive - but you do have the option to switch it off. It is these two things alone that stop this from becoming a 900+ game, otherwise all the right elements are there.

There are some very nice touches, like the way the ball slips and slides over patches of ice, and the way the view pans as the ball travels through pipes. But these are all just icing on a very nice cake. I would venture that this is the best of 'control the ball' type games to appear yet, and unless you are absolutely sick of them, (or you really are concerned about your beauty sleep), then I thoroughly recommend you pop out and buy it today!

● Laurence Scotford

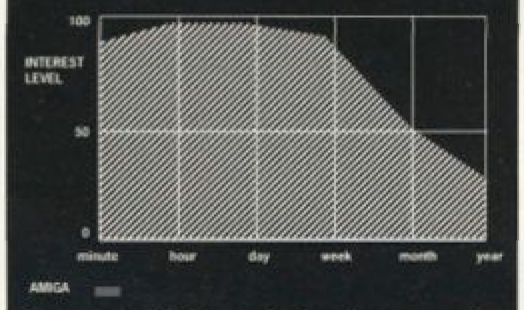
AMIGA VERSION

While the graphics are not exactly pushing this machine to the limit, they are still very nice. The scrolling, on the whole, is very smooth. Sound is a bit repetitive, but you can turn it off quite easily. This is going to be one of those addictive games that will make Amiga owners sleepy eyed and late for work. What better reason do you need to buy it?

GRAPHICS	8	IQ FACTOR	7
AUDIO	6	FUN FACTOR	9

ACE RATING 875

PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE



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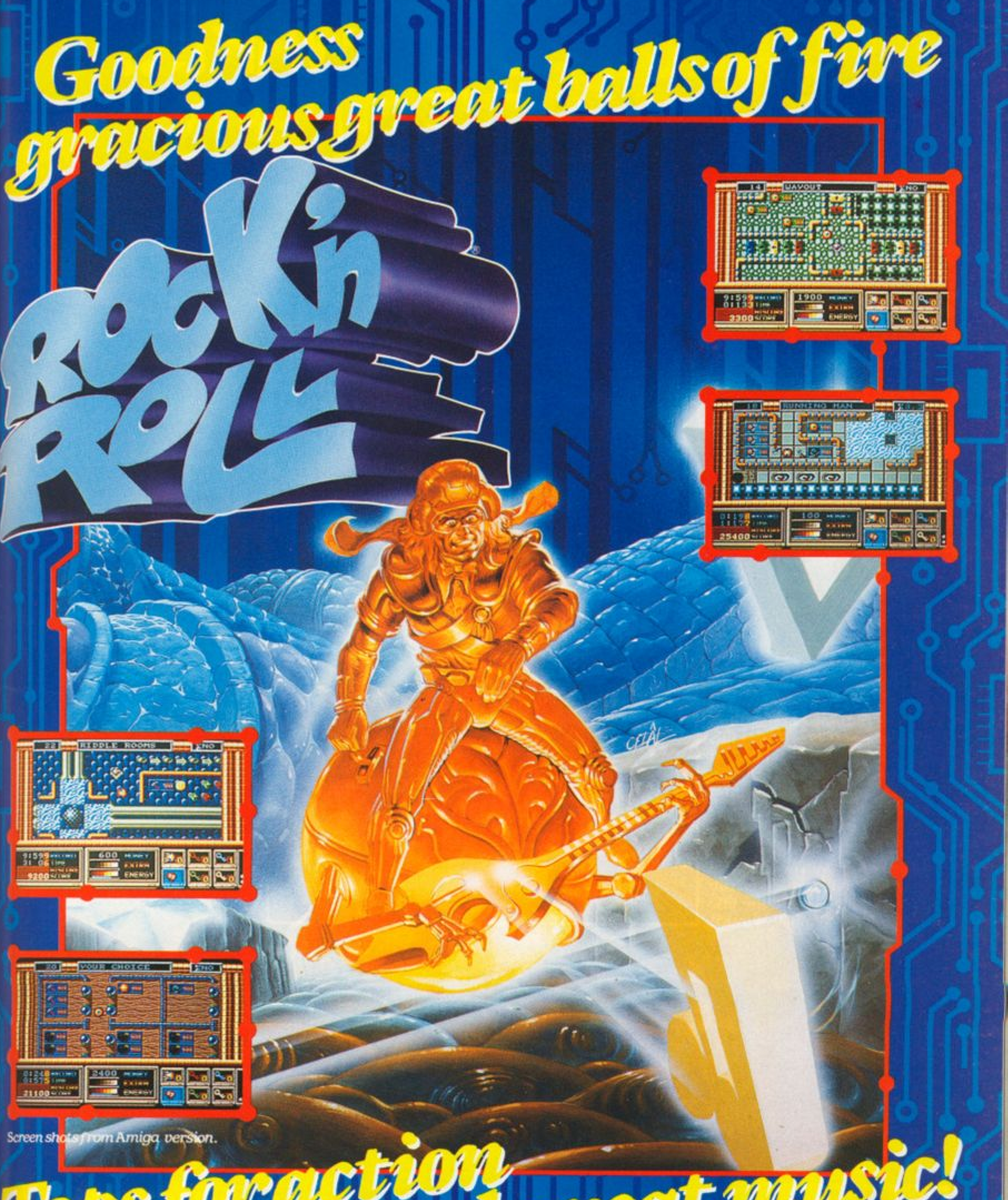
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Screen shots from Amiga version.

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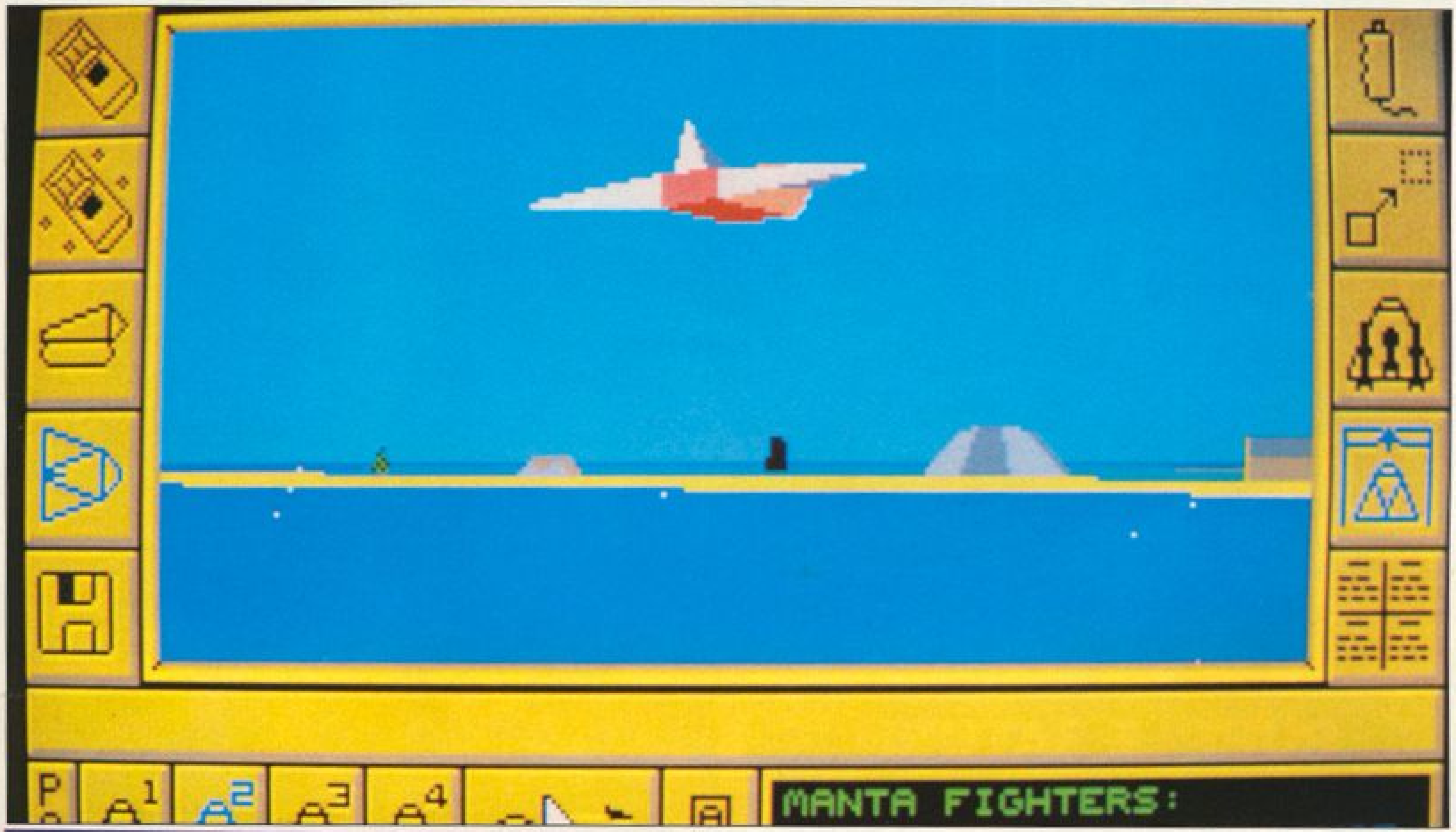
UPDATES

THIS MONTH'S CONVERSIONS INCLUDE STUNT CAR FOR C64



PC TAKES COMMAND

CARRIER COMMAND

Rainbird/Microprose PC £24.95

Volcanic activity has created a vast archipelago from the depths of the ocean, unexplored, and unclaimed by any world power. For a long time now the Earth's accessible resources have been near to exhaustion, but this new cluster of lands has thrown up a rich supply of minerals and materials vital to continued life on the planet.

As the commander of a multirole assault carrier, a secret document has been given to you which reveals full details about the islands and their contents. Unfortunately, a foreign power has gained access to your computers and is slowly, but surely, occupying territories for itself. Allowing them to gain control over the archipelago will mean starvation and ruin for your people; destroying them will lead to wealth and a secure future. Your mission has begun...

The weaponry to accomplish this task includes a fleet of mantas (futuristic jets), amphibious assault craft, a laser turret, surface-to-surface missiles, decoy flares and mobiles, and a ship's stores packed with the latest military hardware. If your carrier is damaged you can set it to repair itself, but too much damage means destruction and the end of the game.

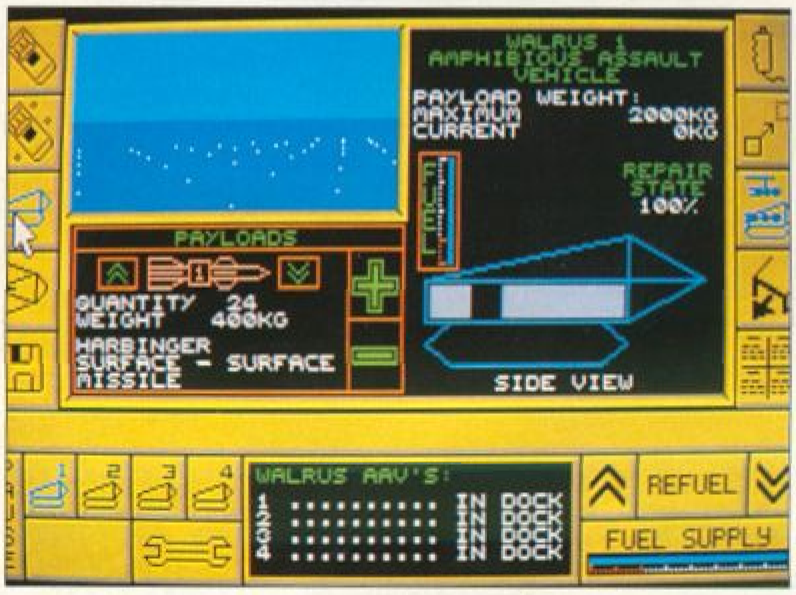
Capturing an island involves knocking out its defences (so making it 'free'), then sending off a landing craft to construct a new base. Gain a cluster of islands and you can establish a supply and communications network. However, everything is played out in real time — so, while you're busy knocking out enemies, the enemy is equally busy occupying territory further north.

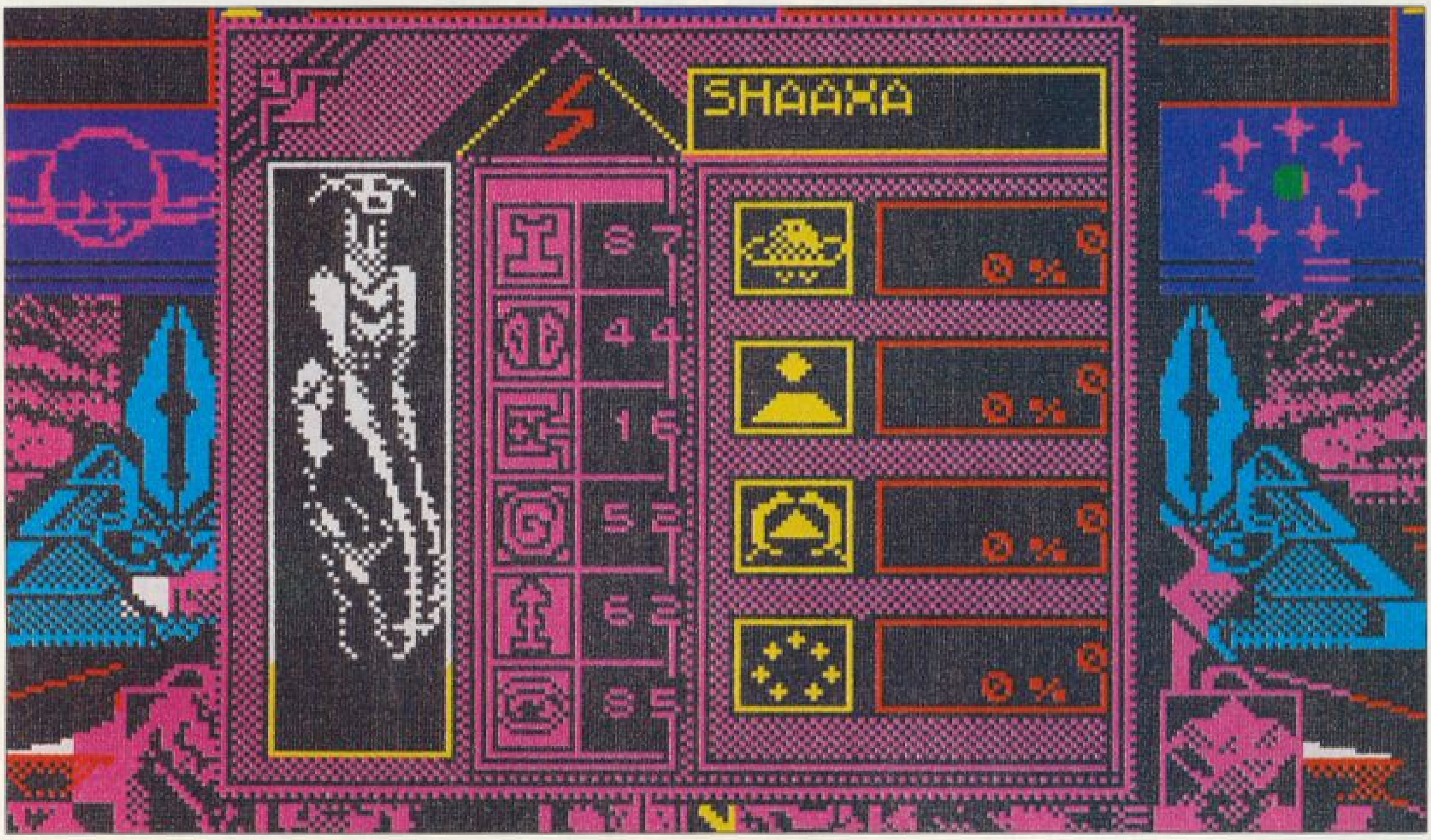
From the beginning you're offered the choice between strategy and action games — the former gives you a quieter introduction and is recommended for beginners. The latter launches you straight into the heat of the battle, as homing missile rain down on your carrier with blunt efficiency. Because of the depth of the game, Realtime Software have thoughtfully provided a save game option.

Although the ST and Amiga versions have been out for over a year, and the superlative Spectrum version for a few months, Carrier Command proves its timelessness as a game. This version is arguably the best of the lot — even on low Mhz machines it moves very fast, and supports all the options you could want from a PC game. It runs in most colour modes (Hercules, CGA, EGA, VGA, and Tandy 16-colour), it can be transferred to a hard disk (though you still need the floppy to act as a 'key'), and it offers the choice between mouse, keyboard, or joystick control — though mouse is by far the best. Even the slowness of travelling between islands has been overcome by an added 'warp' mode.

If you're keen on strategy/action games, you won't find one better than this: it takes time to get into, but is all the more rewarding for it. Carrier Command has an incredible amount of depth and long-tem playability and should provide any serious gamesplayer with months of enjoyment.

ACE RATING: 965





PURPLE SATURN

PURPLE SATURN DAY

Spectrum +3 £14.99dk £9.99cs

Ever fancied kissing the Purple Saturn Queen? Well, if you win the annual Purple Saturn Day Games, you've got no choice, since sucking face with her majesty is the ultimate prize. This year, the Good Lord Exxos has randomly selected the four events for the game himself: Ring Pursuit, Time Jump, Tronic Slider and Brain Bowler.

You can choose any of the four from the initail selection screen. Ring Pursuit has you racing around Saturn's rings in a kind of slalom. Coloured space ships mark your route — you fly to the right of the red ones and to the left of yellow ones, all the time aiming to stay in front of your opponent to score points.

The Tronic Slider places you and your adversary on the orbiting energy field. Shoot the energy balls released into the game area and they yield fragments which are yours to collect. The player who collects the most fragments in the time allowed is the winner.

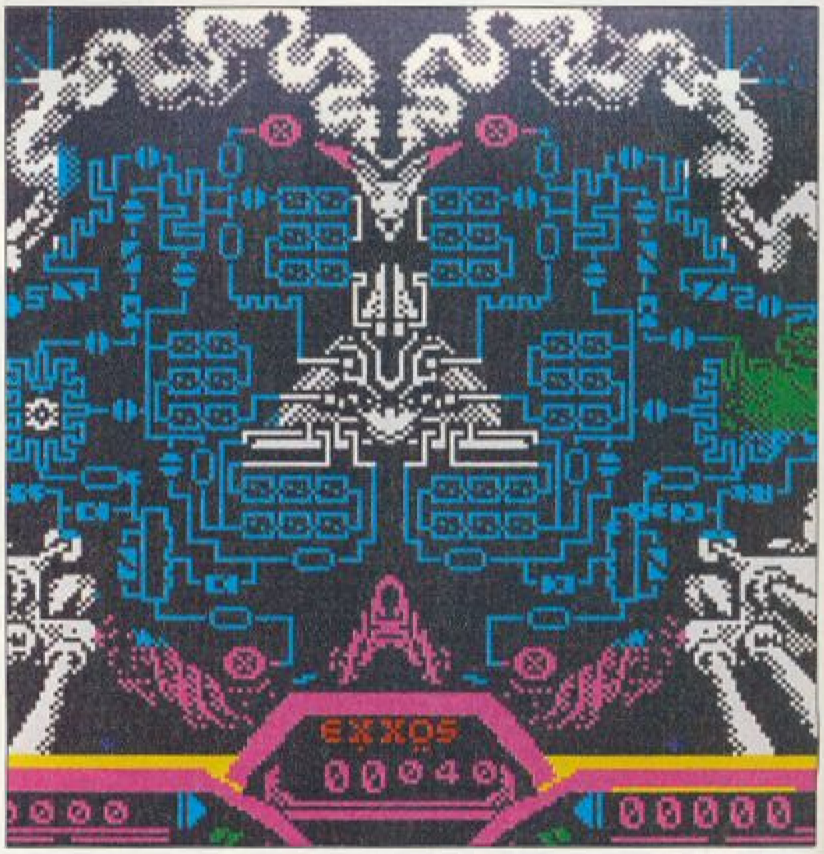
Brain Bowler is by far the most rewarding of the sub-games, because the random puzzle element makes each game different. You're placed on opposite sides of an intergalactic 'brain', controlling an electro-ball which can alter switches, collect energy and allow electrical charges to reach six pins which activate the central Exxos. It's much easier to get the hang of than to describe, and would make a neat budget game on its own.

In contrast, the Time Jump is probably the most redundant of the sporting quartet. You have to jump as far as possible into the future by capturing energy sparks — a kind of operation Wolf in space. These sparks provide fuel for a gravity catapault which launches you through time and space. Once you've catapaulted, you're presented with an image generated randomly according to the amount you jumped — all very nice, but a bit pointless.

What this boils down to is a collection of four reasonably good sub-games, loosely strung over a scenario of competition. There are rounds leading up to a final with opponents of increasing difficulty, and there's a practise game against a robot — but ultimately, there are just four events.

Purple Saturn Day has a brilliant manual which lists such things as recommended diets (including Putrex Vomicus quince) and forbidden substances (good luck shrunken chicken heads), but even they can't save the game as a whole from being just on the good side of mediocre. If you want something a bit weird that's good fun for a while, check it out; if you're used to games with plenty of variety, leave it on the shelf.

ACE RATING: 680



C64 STUNT CAR

STUNT CAR RACER

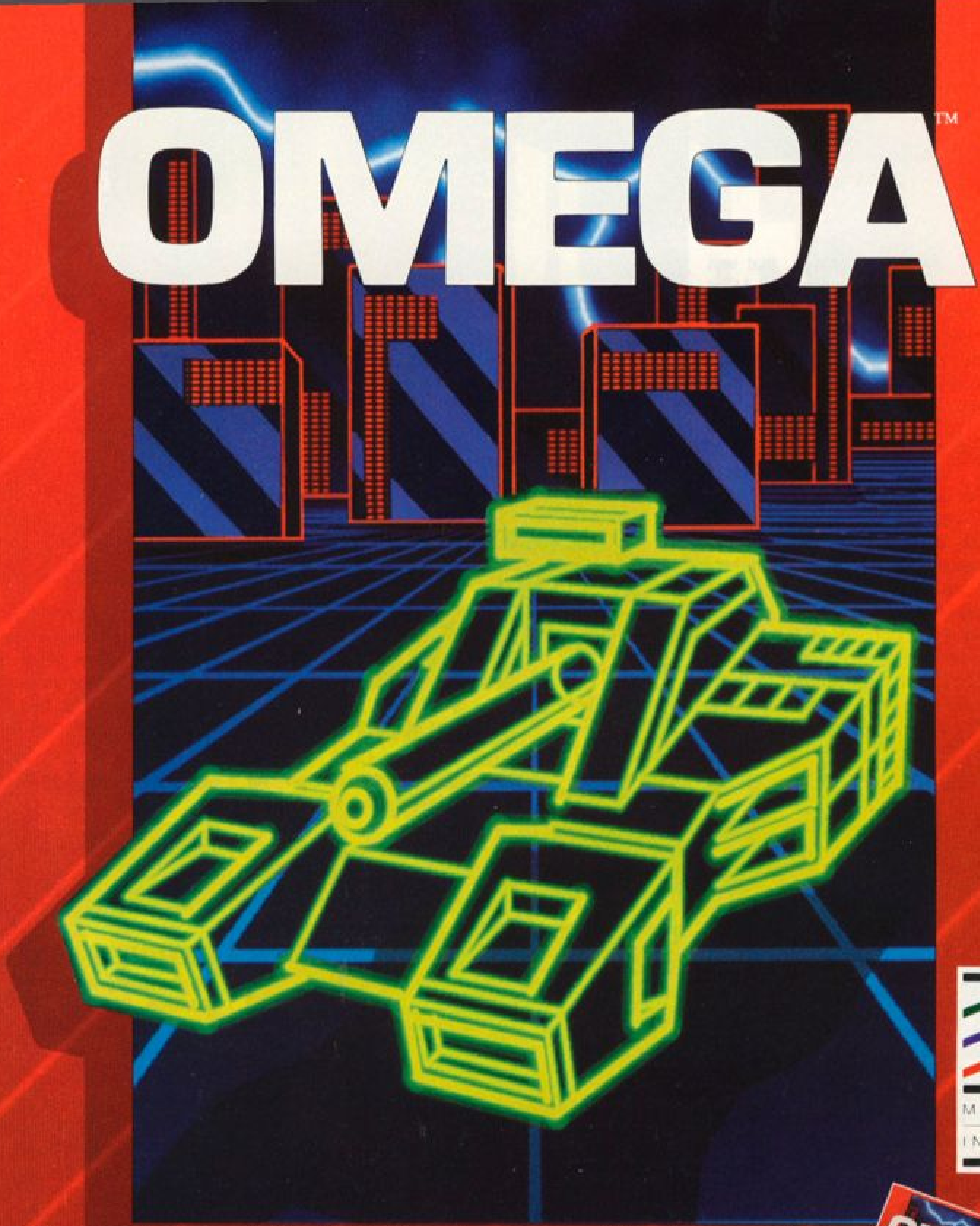
Microstyle £9.99cs £14.99dk ST version reviewed Issue 24

When 16-bit *Stunt Car* arrived, we loved it. We sat down and talked with it, eventually took it to dinner, had a long lasting relationship with it, and finally proposed marriage. C64 *Stunt Car* is every bit as good as the ST incarnation.

It may be a little short on colours but short of gameplay, or indeed speed, it ain't. The cockpit graphics are almost idential to the ST and the Amiga versions, which is pretty amazing, but the most extraordinary thing is the speed. Solid vectors have never been so good on a C64. You can feel every bump, your stomach heaves as you fly over huge hills and jumps, and you cringe as you come off the track at one of its highest points.

A perfect conversion of an amazing game.

ACE RATING: 941



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PAPERBOY

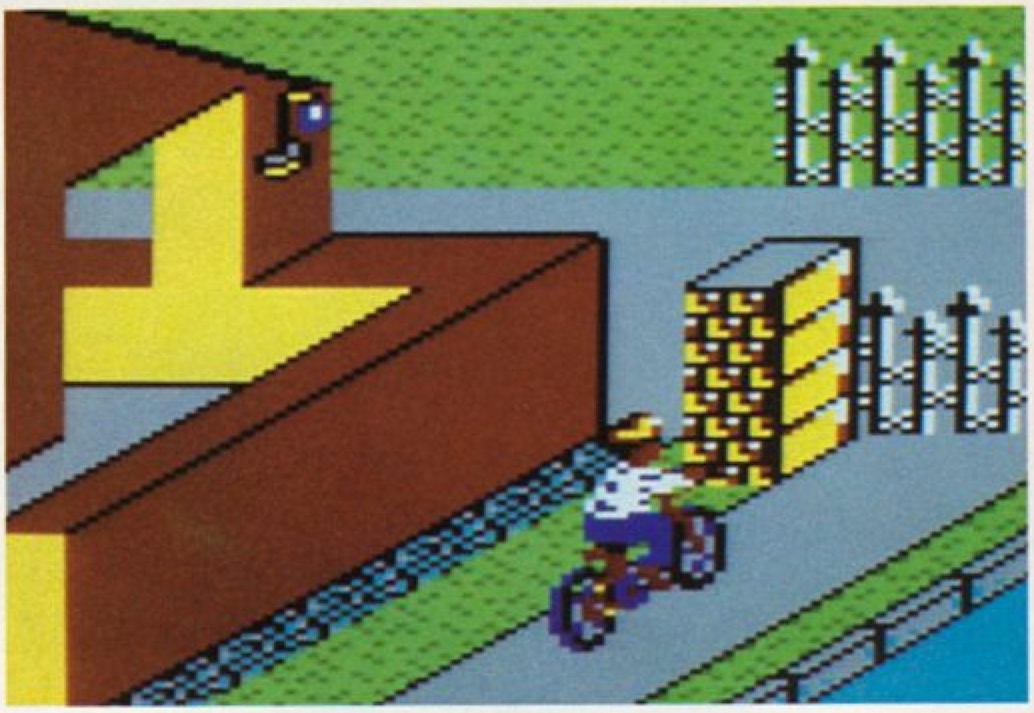
Elite, PC, £24.99

Yep, it's back again. The brilliant coin-op, that was also an 8- bit hit, is now making more fans as a 16-bit conversion. The game, in case you don't know (and if not, where have you been?), has you playing a paperboy of the American variety (who have a tendency to throw papers rather than popping them through the letter box like civilised English paperboys).

Your task is to pedal your bike down a typical American sidewalk bunging papers into your subscribers' mailboxes. If you can't manage a mailbox, a window will do! Miss anybody and they will cancel their subscriptions – and rightly so. As if that isn't enough to cope with, the rest of the world and his wife seem to be hellbent on giving you are a hard time, so until you have learnt to anticipate what's coming, collisions will be frequent.

This version caters for both EGA, CGA and Tandy displays, and while the graphics are inevitably a little blocky they still have a nice cartoony feel to them. Gameplay is as good as it can be without the arcade machine's handlebars. A very good, addictive conversion.

ACE RATING: 800



Paperboy on the PC — as you can see, the graphics are still OK. You can play in EGA or CGA, but either way the gameplay is great.

CPC

GEMINI WING

Elite, Amstrad CPC, £9.99cs, £14.99dk, Amiga version reviewed Issue 26, Ace Rating 760

CPC owners get their chance to do battle with whatever it is you're supposed to be doing battle with this time around. First impressions tell you that it's ten times better than the atrocious C64 version, but even so, it's still pretty bad. Graphically it's fine, with large full colour sprites and all bullets clearly visible, but then you come up against two Amstrad CPC blockades. Amstrad sound and Amstrad speed. Blips and blops accompany the action, and the update is so slow, it seems better suited to a budget adventure game. No seriously, it is that bad. Still, we can at least be thankful that it does scroll!

ACE RATING: 352

ST

PAPERBOY

Elite, ST, £19.99

This really does look and feel like the arcade original. I really can't fault the graphics and sound, and the gameplay has all the charm and sheer addictivness of the coin-op too. Elite has done a superb job on all the *Paperboy* conversions, which considering the excellence of the 8-bit versions is hardly surprising. The bonus sequence in the park is especially well-executed. Highly recommended.

ACE RATING: 850

GEMINI WING

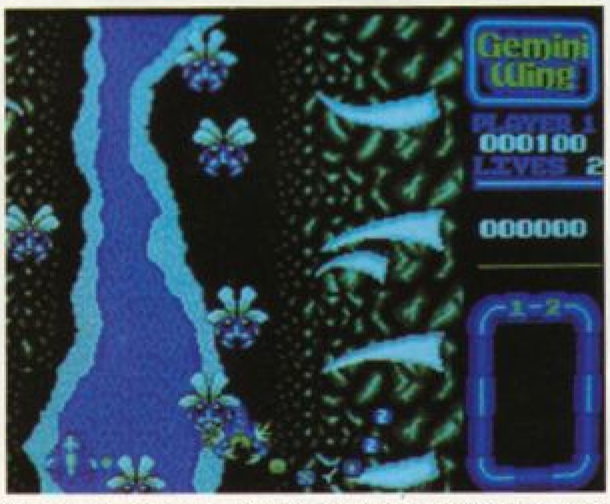
Virgin/Mastertronic, ST, £19.99, Amiga version reviewed Issue 26, Ace Rating 760

This shoot-em-up from Virgin really doesn't offer much more than most similar games currently available for the ST. Sure, it all looks fairly pretty, and it does offer a simultaneous two-player option, but the gameplay is not that hot.

The sprites are not quite as smooth or as fast as those in the Amiga version, so the game feels a little stiff when you are playing it. Additionally the soundtrack that was superb on the Amiga sounds strained when transferred to the ST's inferior sound chip, and I guarantee you will turn it down after the first five minutes. Not a horrendous game, but not an essential buy either.

ACE RATING: 650

Gemini Wing **on the ST — it looks almost identical to the Amiga version. It's a hell of a lot slower though, but unfortunately that doesn't make it any easier or more playable.**



C64

GEMINI WING C64

Virgin/Mastertronic, C64, £9.99cs, £14.99dk, Amiga version reviewed Issue 26, Ace Rating 760

Take a good look back at the history of shoot-em-ups on the 64. *Uridium*, *Terra Cresta*, *Starray*. Now keep looking back, because you ain't gonna find no future in *Gemini Wing*. The sprites are small and blocky, except for the bad guys, which are expanded sprites, which makes them large and blocky. The backdrop is pretty terrible too. There is so much detail, picked out in such bad colours, that it's impossible to see where your ship is, let alone the enemy bullets. Control is sluggish and the soundtrack is awful. Avoid.

ACE RATING: 250

GEMINI WING – WHAT WENT WRONG?

It looks like *Gemini Wing* turned into a bit of a disaster in so far as the C64 and Amstrad versions go. But why, considering that the arcade version was nothing more than a basic shoot-em-up? 'The Amstrad version is so slow because of the amount of colours on screen,' claims Dan Marchant from the Sales Curve. 'We did try to do a faster version with fewer colours, but it looked really naff.' But what of the confusing C64 backdrops? 'I guess the programmers, Imagitec, tried to copy the arcade backdrops, which they did quite well, but in hindsight maybe it was the wrong thing to do. Still, we're happy with it, and so are Virgin/Mastertronic. If nobody else likes it, I guess it's just bad luck. You can't have a hit every time.'

NOW THERE ARE 16-BIT GAMES FOR UNDER A FIVER

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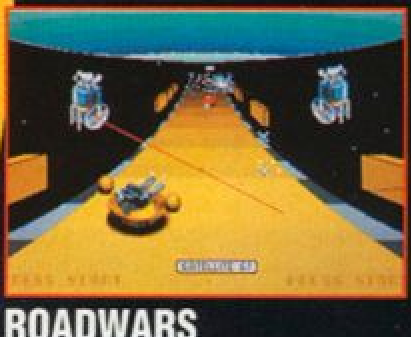

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FEEL THE MOVIE

What do you get when you mix the movie magic of Walt Disney and Lucasfilm, with the realism of a full-size flight simulator? Rik Haynes flies the theatre-simulator...

Walt Disney's latest theme-park attraction at the EPCOT Centre in Florida, Wonders of Life, opened to a rapturous general public last month. At the heart of this pavilion devoted to life, health and medicine is Body Wars, a Fantastic Voyage-type ride utilising Disney's newly developed theatre-simulator technology.

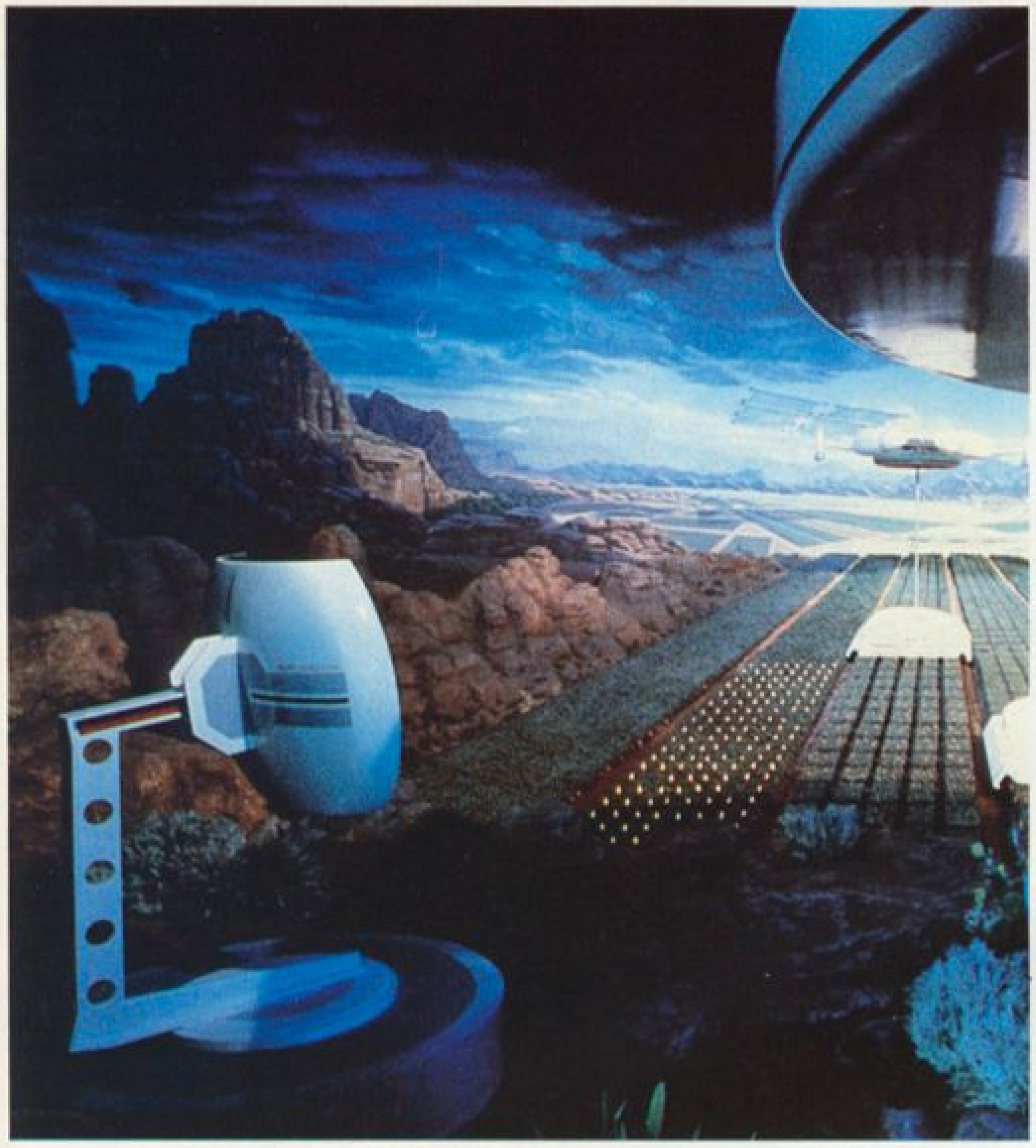
Body Wars is a thrill ride through the immune system of the human body in a simulated battle between trauma troops and infection fighters. Stunning anatomical images, produced through computer graphics and special-effects film techniques, combine with the sensations of a high-speed race against time as guests accompany an ex-fighter pilot and a medical expert on a "fantastic voyage"aboard the cabin of a miniature body probe. Body Wars is in effect a 40-passenger flight-simulator, hence the term theatre-simulator: a synthesis of movie special effects (Americans call their cinema's theatres) and civilian/military flight-simulators.

The theatre-simulator concept is a collaboration between Disney Imagineers (the creative design, engineering, production and project-managment subsidiary of Walt Disney, responsible for all attractions at the Disneyland and Disney World theme parks) and Industrial Light and Magic, the special effects production division of Lucasfilm. Another division, Lucasfilm Games, produce brilliant computer games like *Zak McKraken, Maniac Mansion, Rescue on Fractulus, Ballblazer* and *Battlehawks 1942*. George Lucas, the man behind the *Star Wars* and *Indiana Jones* movies and founder of Lucasfilm, has taken a personal hand in helping with the theatre-simulator design.

The original theatre-simulator ride was first unveiled at Disneyland back in 1987. Presented by M&M/Mars, Star Tours is a *Star Wars* inspired ride taking you on a space voyage to the Moon of Endor. The whole atmosphere is enhanced by the presence of two lovable Star Wars characters – C3PO and R2D2. Cutting edge technology is employed to make you actually believe you are on-board a Star Speeder. By synchronising a stunning film with the motion of a theatre-size simulator, passengers actually feel what they see, the action virtually out of control. Star Tours is open now at Disneyland in California, and will open in early 1990 at the Disney-MGM Studio's in Florida.

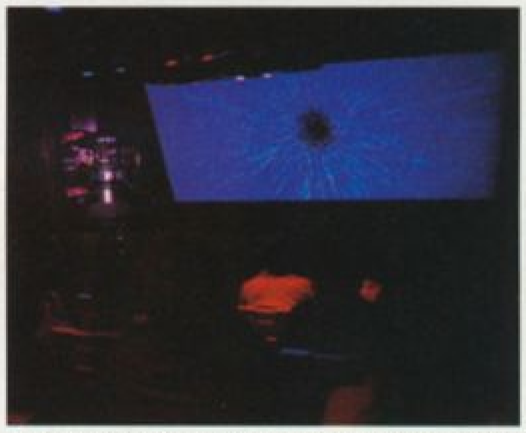
Body Wars has just opened in the Wonders

Universe of Energy: Another Future World attraction at EPCOT centre – Future World showcases imagination, knowledge and technologies of the future. Presented by Exxon, this is a unique 97-passenger theatre-car glide through a primeval diorama – a forerunner of the theatre-simulator partially powered by photovoltaic solar cells. Audio-animatronic dinosaurs, winged reptiles and special effects such as projected smells, raging storms, earthquakes and an erupting volcano, help chronicle the Earth's energy resources. Disney audio-animatronics characters are a combination of cybernetics, computers and audio-visuals.



Horizons: The desert farm of Mesa Verder, one of the envisioned communities of the future presented by General Electric. Horizons is another Future World attraction featuring the Omnisphere: the largest screen and motion picture film format in the world. The Imax frame area is about ten times the area of 35mm feature film frame. By putting the two standard Omnimax screens together, the Omnisphere screen measures 80 feet high by 240 feet across. Horizons also has 48 audio-animatronic figures and 36 animated props.

EPCOT centre opened on October 1st, 1982. Other Walt Disney World Trivia: (1) Walt Disney World has more than 28, 000 employees. (2) It covers 28, 000 acres or 43 square miles – twice the size of Manhattan. (3) Only 25% of the land has been developed, and another 25% is designated a wilderness preserve.



Star Tours: Visual sensations and actual motion combine to create a thrill attraction.

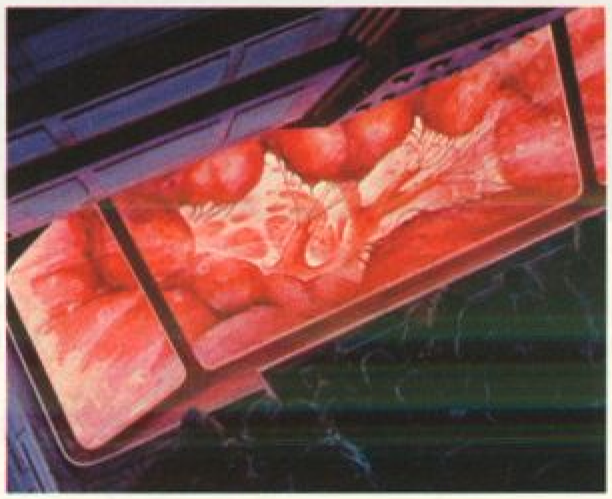
Droids repairing a battle-scarred Star Tours Star Speeder – offering a slight sense of foreboding before the impeding space flight. Passengers take in a sales pitch for the latest intergalactic travel packages now being offered to the humble space traveller.

of Life pavilion at EPCOT (Experimental Prototype Community Of Tomorrow) centre in Orlando, Florida. Using the same theatre-simulator technology as Star Tours, Body Wars redirects the theme towards inner space – the human body. The ride begins with an attack on a person's epidermis by a giant, germ-carrying splinter. Instead of a Star Speeder, you board a microscopic body probe to explore the inner wonders of the human body, racing to find the immune-system ammunition needed to fend off the troops of bacteriological invaders. Body Wars is the centre piece attraction at Wonders of Life pavilion, based on life, health and medicine. Michael Eisner, chairman and chief executive officer of Walt Disney, says: "For more than 10 years, our Imagineers have been searching for a way to dramatise the inner workings of the human body. Body Wars links the future of the health sciences in a dynamic and entertaining way."

Walt Disney has plans for further theatre-simulator developments in the future, and with the opening of the Paris-based Euro Disneyland in 1992, you may be able to experience the thrill of a theatre-simulator without the thrill (and expense) of a trip to the States...

Star Tours: Passengers waiting to board the 40-passenger Star Speeder theatre-simulator before it takes off for the Moon of Endor. Get ready to encounter a galaxy full of misadventures...

Body Wars presented by Metropolitan Life Insurance: an artists impression of the thrill ride through the immune system of the human body... wonder where the exit is?



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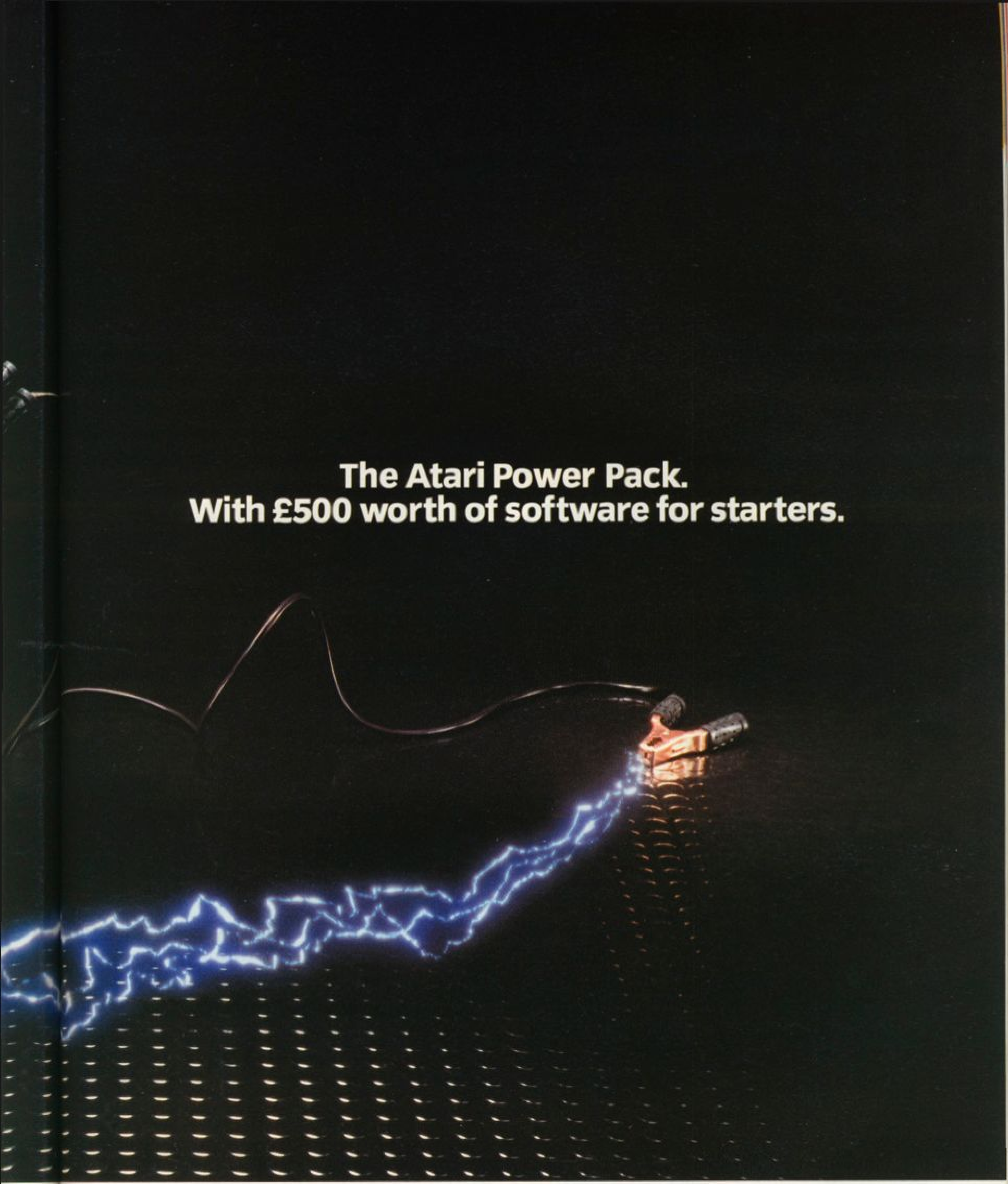
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Screenshots from ST version

Atari ST, Amiga, IBM PC and compatibles.

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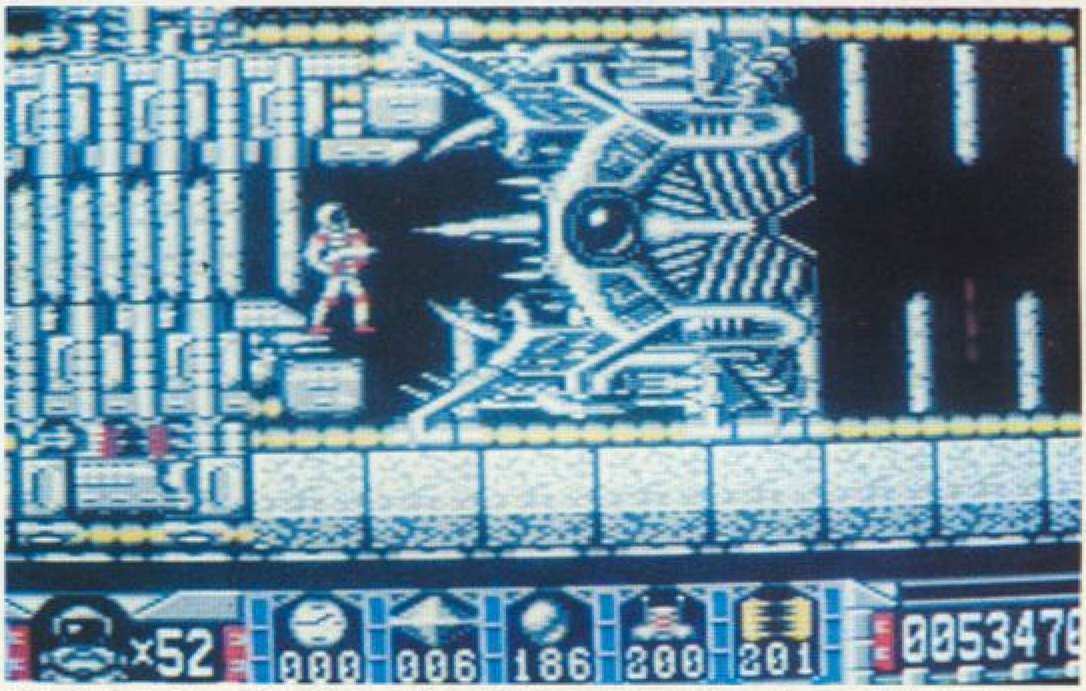
CROCKS OF GOLD

ACE GETS TO THE END OF RAINBOW ARTS...

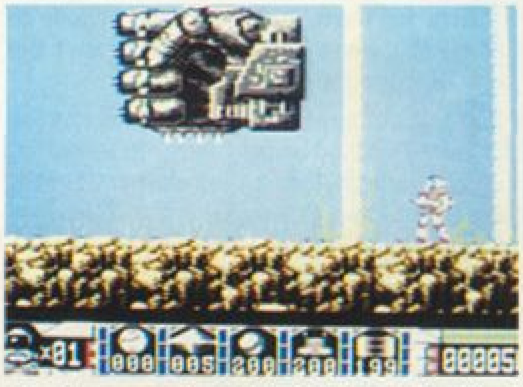
ACE travelled to Germany to visit the offices of Rainbow Arts - and discovered some software secrets that got us even more excited than the free lunch. A C64 game that looks as if it's running on an Amiga?? A new method of putting soundtracks on games?? And a CIGARETTE game?? It's all in the pot of gold at the end of the Rainbow...



Yup, that nasty looking thing on the right is one big sprite, and yes, this is *Turricane* – running on a C64! If you saw how fast that thing could move, you'd be speechless!

OK, so we had SOME excuse. We were standing in one of the development studios of Rainbow Arts in Dusseldorf, just recovering from the flight and an oversized bratwurst. There were machines everywhere, all connected to different monitors. No chance of telling which program was running on which monitor. Suddenly this whopping great sprite menaced its way across one of the screens, chopping and sliding.

'That looks nice,' murmured your bratwurst victim, and wandered over to the Amiga to try and take control of the little fellow who was dancing around doing his best to destroy the vicious bit-mapped beastie.


Turricane again – that fist really flies! And the action's as smooth as it is fast.

There was a polite cough (in German) from Teut Weidemann – software development executive of Rainbow Arts. 'Actually,' he said, 'the program's running on that 64 over there.' 'Impossible,' we replied. 'Look at the size of that thing. You'd never get that skipping around on a C64. Perish the thought...'

We were wrong, of course. But when we'd recovered from the shock, worse was to come. The game in question, provisionally entitled Turricane, was programmed by Manfred Trenz – and it was only his SECOND game! His first one was Denaris on the Amiga and, well this is a bit depressing, chaps, but the fact is he did the entire program (his first ever) in six weeks.

Turricane is pretty monstrous in more ways than one. First, the action is very smooth. We were a bit dubious when Rainbow Arts claimed that the frame rate was 50Hz – on a C64?? Come on, pull the other frankfurter, chum – but further inspection and gameplay made the claim look disturbingly accurate.

The basic scenario involves battling your way through various landscapes, which range from the mountainous through the submarine to the gothic horror interior. The map is vast – in fact, we managed to get hold of Manfred's own sketch of it (see next page). And if you're wondering about the scale, we spent about 25 minutes crossing the first five peaks on the left-hand mountain range!

TEUT TALK

Teut Weidemann, Rainbow Arts' product development supremo gives us the nitty- gritty on...

3D

We're keen to introduce 3D systems into areas where they have never been used before. Watch out for a 3D RPG and...wait for it...a 3D platform game. We're also working on a 3D hardware project for the arcades.

FRACTALS

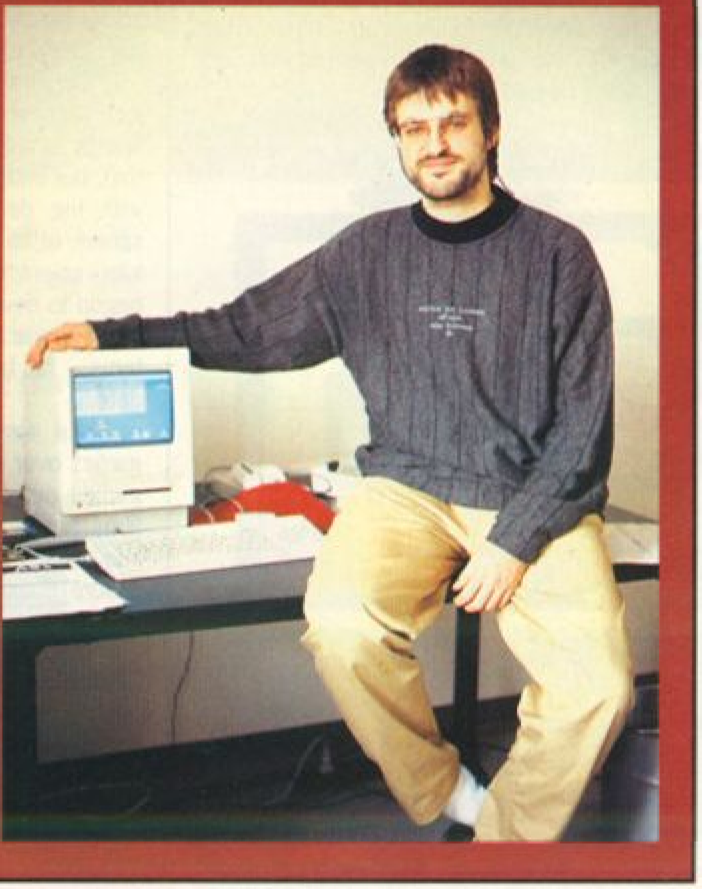
We'll be releasing a new fractal game through Lucasfilms on the 16-bit machines in September 1990

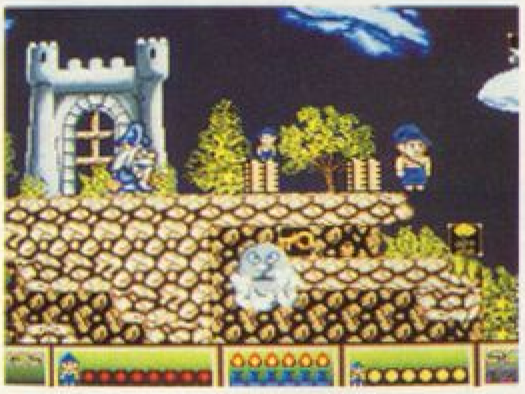
ON THE CPC, THE SPECTRUM, AND THE ST

If I had my way, we'd burn the lot of them. By 1991, dead - along with the ST. The trouble with the ST was that the original spec wasn't good enough (single sided drives) and now everyone is forced into writing software for the lower spec machines because that's where the market is.

ON THE NINTENDO GAMEBOY AND THE ATARI LYNX

Provided the Atari Lynx is properly marketed, the Gameboy doesn't stand a chance. The Americans want colour, and besides, the spec of the Lynx is absolutely incredible (see article in this issue of ACE for more details). The Atari machine is also bigger than the Gameboy, and the Americans like things big.





***Apprentice* - a very cutesy little number that involves block puzzles and arcade action.**

BREAKING THE LIMITS

With games like Turricane under development, and programmers like Manfred in chains, Rainbow Arts are obviously a force to be reckoned with. But we discovered that there was a lot more going in this small German office than we would ever have imagined. How about a 'cigarette game', for example? Apparently German cigarette company Philip Morris (producers of L&M cigarettes) asked RA to do a promotional game for them! It wasn't previewable, unfortunately, otherwise we could have given you a quick drag, but the idea sounded outrageous. 'We've had several approaches from big German companies to program promotional software for them,' said Teut, 'the attitude to computer games here in Germany isn't the same as it is in the UK.'

No, it certainly isn't, not when Microprose games get banned by the German government. Every game that goes on the shelf in Germany has to be vetted to be sure it doesn't encourage children to embark on a life of mass alien murder. 'It's not a serious problem for us,' said Teut, 'but we do have to remember the question of taste. However, we wouldn't really want to produce undesirable games in the first place.'

As if to underline this, one of the best titles that we saw in Dusseldorf was Apprentice. This is an extremely cute little number that takes the frolic factor from Super Mario Bros (though there's no similarity in gameplay) and combines it with the block puzzling elements of Sokoban, adding a good deal of attractive graphic diversity in the process. The nicest touch here, as you bounce and climb around the landscape, was the little doppelganger – a tiny scaled-down version of the cutesy figure you control, who you can 'split off' from the hero and send off on adventures all of its own. This isn't just a gratuitous bit of idiocy, it actually serves to introduce a whole new set of puzzles in the game as you discover blocks that can only be accessed by someone of small size and vice-versa.

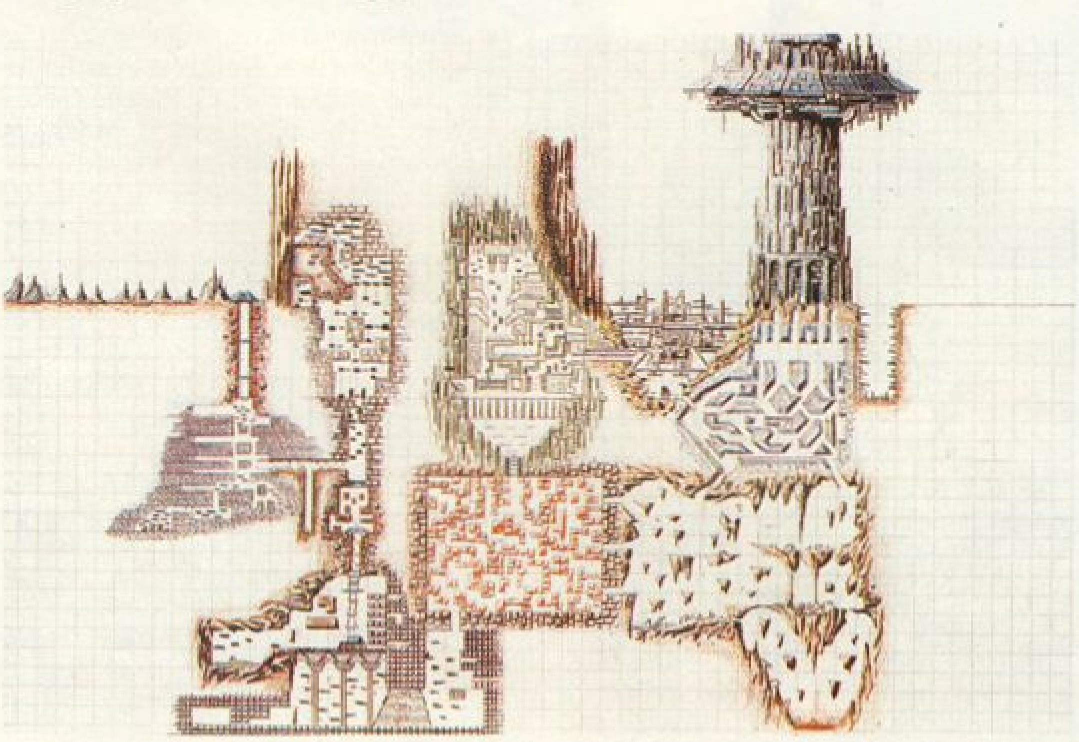
SOUND SURPRISES

Rainbow Arts have also been turning their attention to the sound side of things with their recent release Rock And Roll (reviewed in this issue). Following from their experience with R&R, RA have developed a new system for storing and using samples in games that could have a dramatic effect on the music we hear while we play.

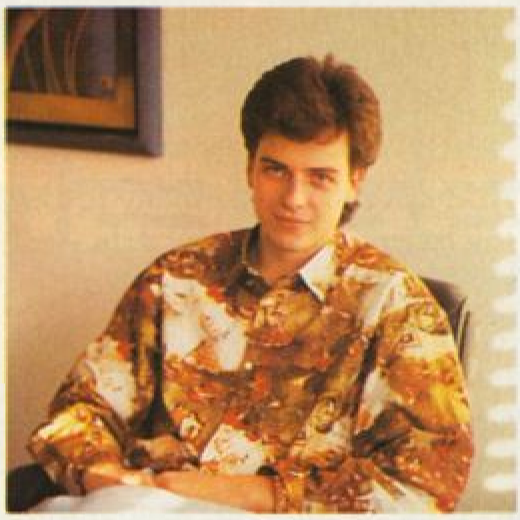
Most players will probably have already heard sampled sound tracks on games. Some of the most notorious recent examples have been the Psygnosis titles Shadow of the Beast and Blood Money, not to mention Xenon II's megablast. However, sampled sound eats up quite a bit of memory and you're unlikely to get a very long, non-repeating sampled sound track as you blast away.

Until now, that is. RA have developed a system that actually scans the samples and breaks them up into small sections. These sections are then stored and referenced by a look-up table. Combining this system with other compression methods means that we can expect to get some very long, high-quality sampled soundtracks in the near future. Doubtless other software houses will be disassembling every RA product that comes their way in an effort to duplicate the system.

'Our next effort, now we have that system, is to draft in professional musicians to write scores for games in the same way that people write scores for movies. We want the music to mirror exactly the action of the game and to contribute to the atmosphere by being appropriate – not just by being loud. We have a good start here since our music programmer, Chris Hulsbeck, is the German equivalent of Rob Hubbard.' Can't be bad.



The world of *Turricane* - involves falling down chutes, underwater battles, and mountainous challenge!



Mark Ulrich, founder of Rainbow Arts, started the company while he was still at school. By the time he was 17, he had three employees. Seems like he spends most of his money on shirts...

THE POT OF GOLD

OK, so the software we saw was impressive. But good games come and go, and often the companies that produce them just disappear in the mists of time, eh what? However, Rainbow Arts actually managed to get us even more excited about their future plans than about their current products.

'We can't go on just doing the sort of games we're doing now,' claims Teut. 'The problem is that we've already reached the technological limits of the C64. Once you get someone like Manfred achieving 50 frames a second there really isn't anywhere else to go. There's gameplay of course, but we already have (literally) a bible of gameplay rules that all our programmers work to. So we have to look elsewhere...'

Teut reckons that after the release of Conqueror, Turricane, and Apprentice, Rainbow Arts will have reached the end of an era. From the middle of next year, their programming teams will start to explore brave new worlds of programming. Teut is a Macintosh fan so he's already been impressed by the advantages of such hypergames as Cosmic Osmo (see ACE Issue 24) and he's dead keen to steer an exciting course through new gamestyles.

'The first thing we're going to do is a project concerning a highly complex fantasy sports simulation. I can't say any more than that, but imagine the adrenalin of sport mingled with the detail of simulation and the atmosphere of fantasy. After that, we're heading out into scientific RPG territory. We've already begun to develop techniques that will enable us to generate and simulate entire galactic systems – far larger than anything we've seen to date.'.

'Our aim is to be able to release our games over different media. After all, we make games out of films – why shouldn't we make films out of games? We're determined to put into our titles sufficient originality and design to ensure that they can be converted into other entertainment media.'

There's no doubt that RA, now one of the most successful European software houses outside the UK, have the means to pursue these aims. Despite an air of secrecy, it's clear that they are already investigating the possibilities of dedicated hardware, CD-I, and other game media. Watch this space...

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'F-16 Combat Pilot wins hands down'
– 5 star game – New Computer Express.

'F-16 Combat Pilot pulls out all the stops'
– game of the month, The Games Machine.

F-16
COMBAT PILOT

I'm primed for action as my F-16 leaves the runway. This time my mission is to destroy a battalion of tanks. Suddenly, threat warning – interceptors closing fast! I quickly select dogfight mode and arm a Sidewinder. We both fire at the same time – chaff and a high-g turn out manoeuvres his missile. A loud explosion tells me he's not so lucky.

Flying fast and low, I turn my F-16 towards my target. Time to switch on the ground radar and arm the laser-guided Mavericks. I fire six missiles in quick succession, Lantirn automatically locking on to each tank. With flak bursting around me I dive for cover and head for home. Approaching base, I contact the tower and request a talkdown for my night landing.

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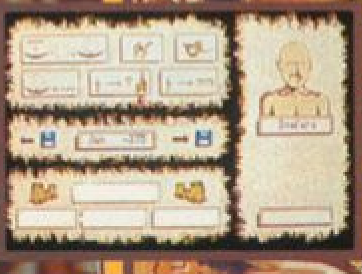

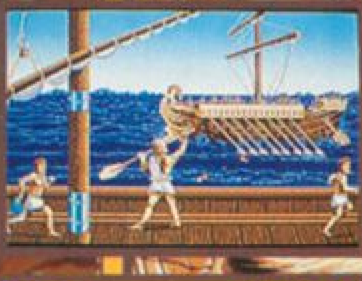

Screen Shots From Amiga Version

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"The graphics are superb..."
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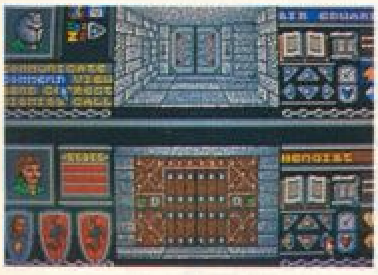
TRICKS 'N' TACTICS

STUCK? FRUSTRATED? CONFUSED? TRICKS 'N' TACTICS WILL SOON SORT YOU OUT...

BLOODWYCH

		BLOODWYN STONEMAIDEN	ASTROTH SLAEMWORE	SIR EDNARD LIO	ULRICH STERNAXE	MURLOCK DARKHEART	ZOTHEN RUNECASTER	MEGRIM OF MOONWYCH	ZASTAPH MANTRIC	ELEANOR OF AVALON	BALDRICK THE DUNG	SETHRA BHOAGHAIL	LLEGIST MELDAMASH	ROSEANNE SWIFTHAND	ALFRICK FULAENDOR	MR FLAY SEPULCRAST	THAI CHANG OF UINN
Colour/Shield	Red			*			*			*							*
	Green	*							*			*			*		
	Blue				*			*			*			*			
	Yellow		*			*							*			*	
	Spade	*	*	*	*												
	Club					*	*	*	*								
	Heart									*	*	*	*				
	Diamond													*	*	*	*
Attributes	Strength	35	34	33	36	19	19	16	18	24	24	23	25	16	16	13	18
	Agility	17	21	26	23	23	22	24	23	16	20	18	20	32	31	32	36
	Intelligence	13	15	14	16	38	35	36	31	15	18	21	23	14	19	20	16
	Charisma	13	15	13	11	14	20	17	19	35	35	36	35	18	18	11	15
	Hit Points	35	37	32	35	18	16	17	17	24	25	24	26	24	23	20	22
	Vitality	31	26	28	38	26	23	25	25	24	25	23	27	19	22	18	25
	Armour	5	7	8	8	10	10	10	10	9	9	7	9	10	10	6	9
	Spell Points	6	7	7	8	23	21	22	19	9	9	10	11	7	9	10	8
Spells	Magelock						*			*							
	Beguile				*			*			*						
	Armour	*							*			*					
	Deflect		*			*							*				
	Confuse							*						*			
	Paralyse								*						*		
	Terror					*										*	
	Missile			*			*										*
Weapons	Long sword	*	*	*	*												
	Staff					*	*	*	*								
	Short sword									*	*	*	*				
	Dagger													*	*	*	*
	Food and mead	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*

Now, how about tackling Mirrorsoft's well-received *Bloodwych*. This is made all the more easier by S.Sykes of Epsom, Surrey who provides a few helpful hints as well as a map of the Champion's Hall and entrance to the Keep with a chart showing the attributes of the champions at the beginning of the adventure.



(1) When starting off, choose the four champions you want, but only recruit three of them to start with. Go round the halls finding the others and recruiting them. Take away the weapons, food, money, and keys. Dismiss them and kill them. When you have done that to all twelve extra characters, recruit your last character and start the game.

(2) It will be necessary to put some of the equipment in a safe place where you can find it, ie.e a shelf, until you have recruited the last champion to your party as you cannot carry it all whilst recruiting and killing the last few champions.

(3) Due to lack of space each champion has to carry things. Have one champion carrying all the keys and two champions carrying the money, as this will give you an extra five pockets to use.

(4) On the map near the keep entrance is a man (next to W1), this man will buy your extra weapons, but do haggle with him, even resort to Smalltalk. Use info under W1 for amounts.

(5) After selling equipment you can get off him 4 chainmail armours, 2 leather shields, and 2 bucklers costing 12, 6, and 10 respectively.

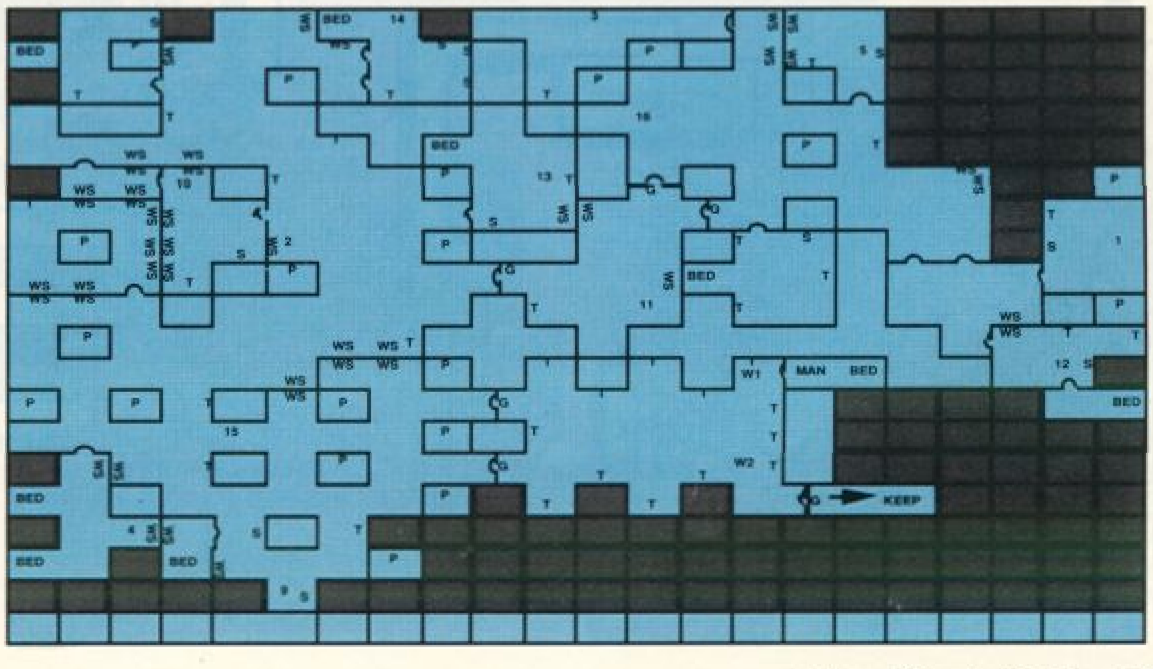
HALLS OF THE CHAMPIONS

S = Shelf
WS = Wooden slates
T = Tapastries
(**W** = Words)

P = Pillar
G = Gate
No.s = Champions
W1 = Dagger 5
Leather shield 6

Swords 10
Staves 8
Leather 7
Chain 12
Shield 10

W2 = Beyond lies the keep.

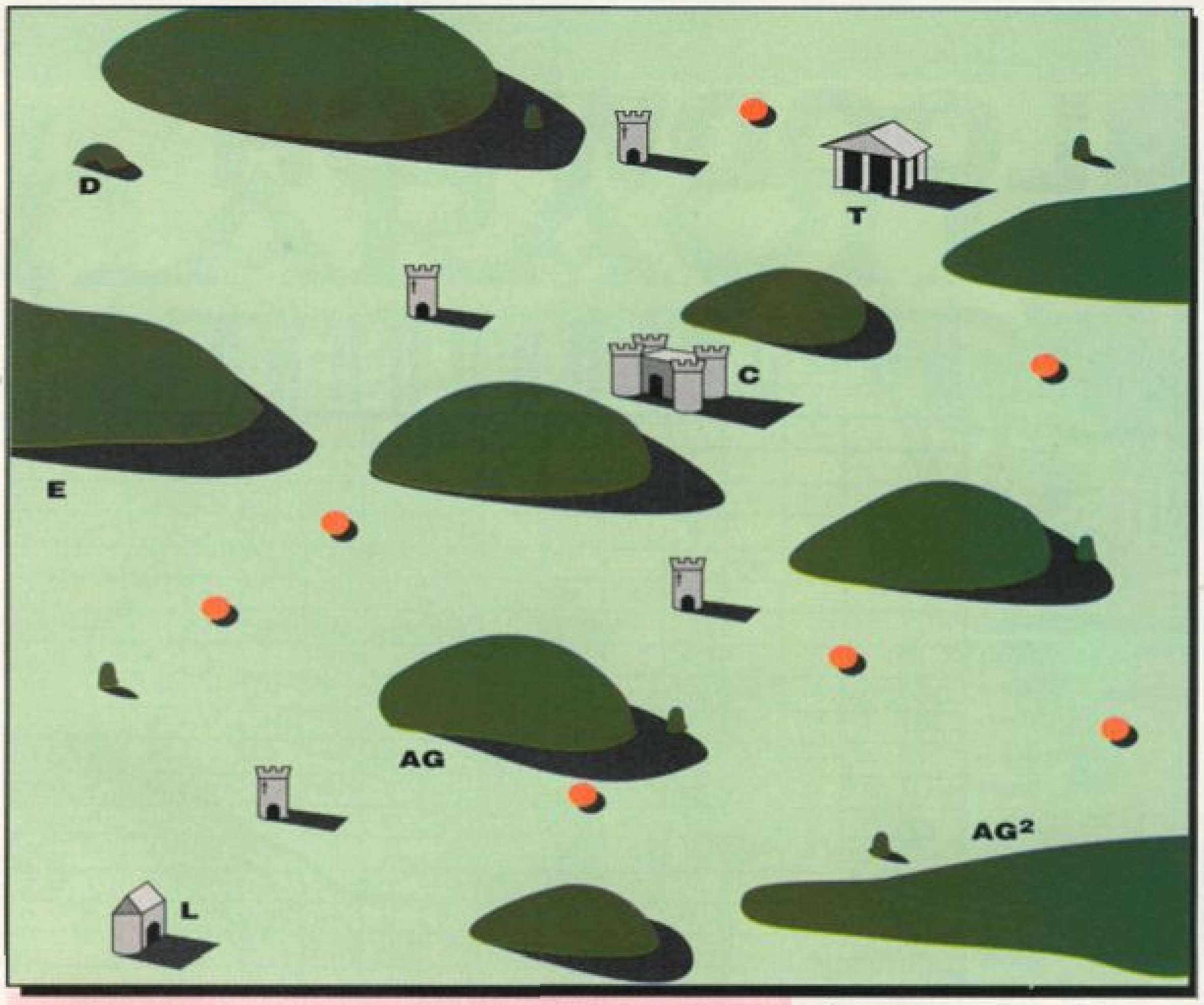


GALDREGON'S DOMAIN

Still struggling through *Galdregon's Domain*? Thought so. Want to make some real progress? Thought so. Want to see the complete solution, sent in by Darren Martin of Hounslow, Middlesex? Thought so...

To get out of the castle you can either click on run, which takes you to the castle exit, or use the map.

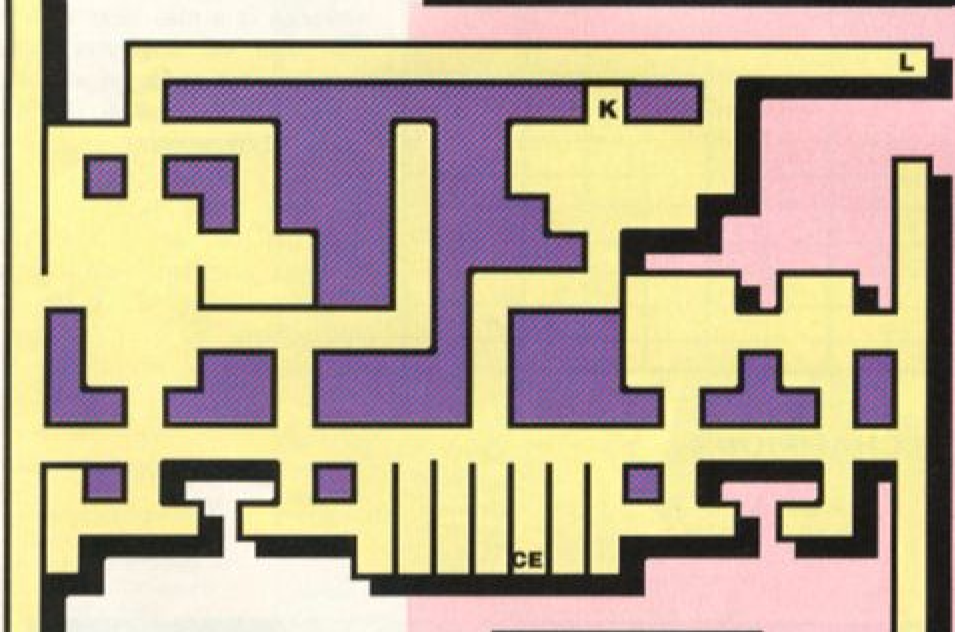
You will need to go to places marked on the map, but in some places, e.g. the Forest of Elves, Temple of Set, and Labyrinth it is best to go all round (to build up armour, potions, scrolls, and weapons). Some maps do not show the entire area of the place.



▲ MAIN MAP

KEY

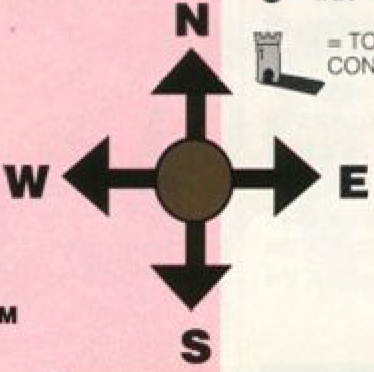
C = CASTLE
T = TEMPLE OF SET
D = CAVES OF DOOM
E = FOREST OF ELVES
AG = ASSASINS GUILD
AG2 = ASSASINS GUILD. HERE YOU WILL FIND THE LORD OF ASSASINS WHO HOLDS A GEM
L = ENTRANCE TO THE LABYRINTH. THIS WILL ONLY APPEAR AFTER ALL OTHER FOUR GEMS HAVE BEEN COLLECTED
● = INN
▙ = TOWER. YOU CAN ONLY CONQUER 3 OF THESE

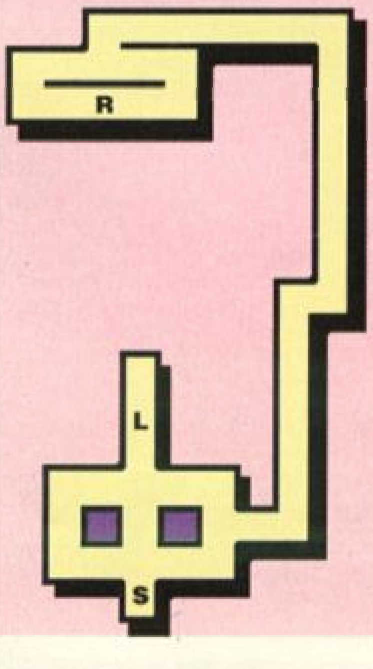


◄ CASTLE

KEY

L = HERE IS LICH HE HOLDS A GEM
K = THIS IS WHERE THE KING IS AND WHERE YOU START
CE=CASTLE ENTRANCE/EXIT

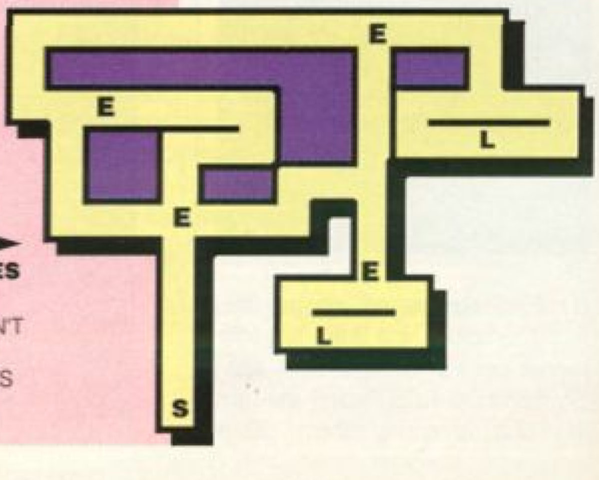




◄ CAVES OF DOOM

KEY

R = ROCK MONSTER IS HERE
L = MOST LIKELY PLACE TO FIND THE LORD OF DWARVES
S = START

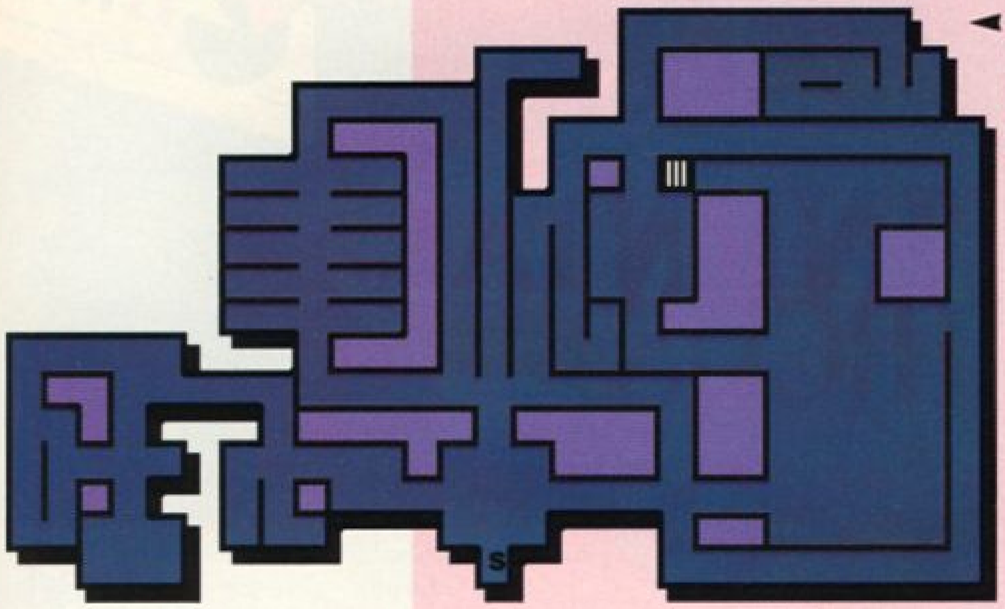


► FOREST OF ELVES

KEY

E = EAGLE. DOESN'T DO ANYTHING
L = LORD OF ELVES

The first gem you should go for is the one that the rock monster carries in the Caves of Doom. The entrance to the Caves of Doom is near the top left section of the main map. Before you go off for the gem you should go into one of the one door inns near the bottom of the map. In one you will find a viking who gives you a magic sword. In the other is a wizard who gives you a book of spells. Do not waste spells (scrolls), use them wisely. Now go and conquer three of the towers. Next go to the Caves of Doom and now find the

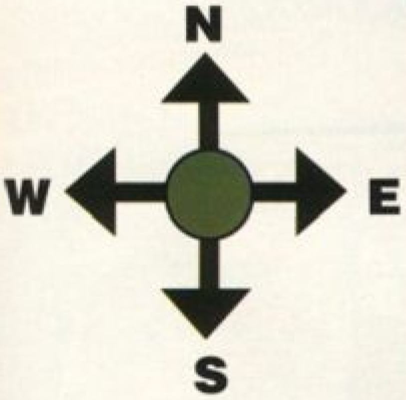


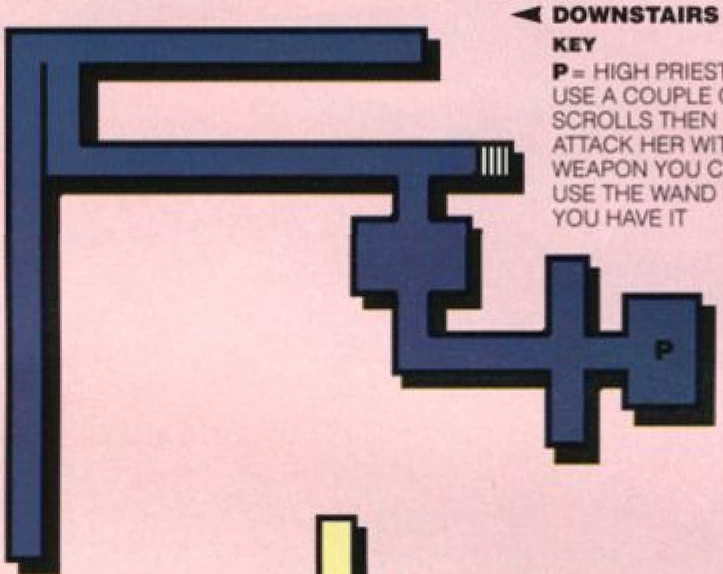
THE TEMPLE OF SET

KEY

S = START

IIII = STAIRS

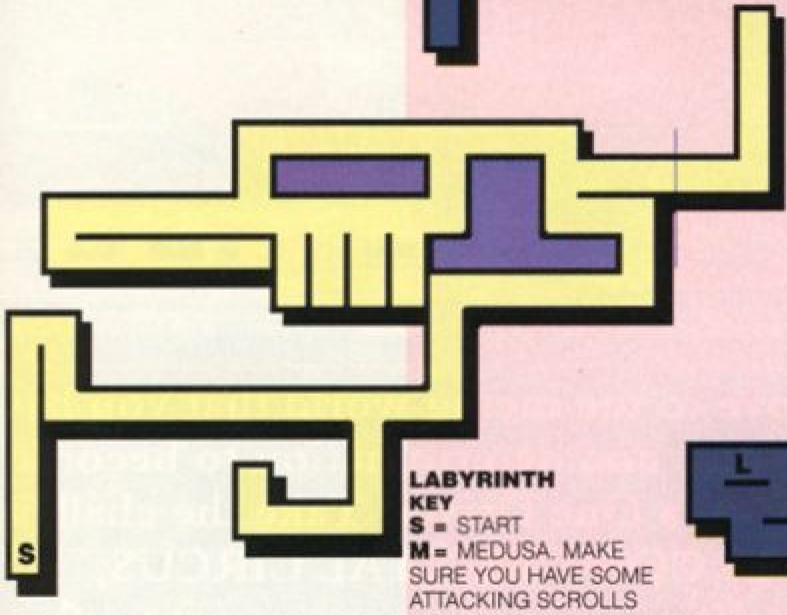




DOWNSTAIRS

KEY

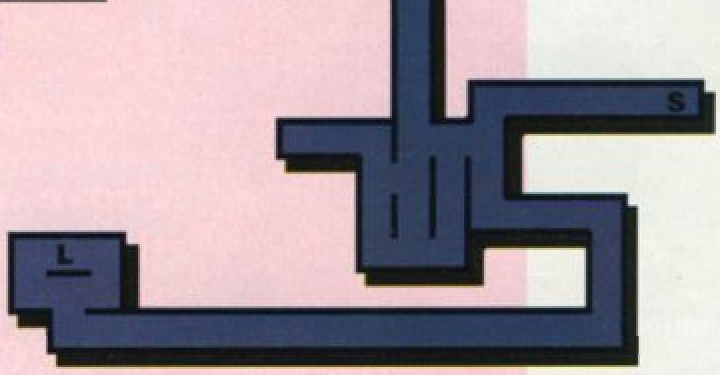
P = HIGH PRIESTESS USE A COUPLE OF SCROLLS THEN ATTACK HER WITH A WEAPON YOU CAN USE THE WAND IF YOU HAVE IT



ASSASIN'S GUILD

KEY

S = START



ASSASINS' GUILD2

KEY

S = START

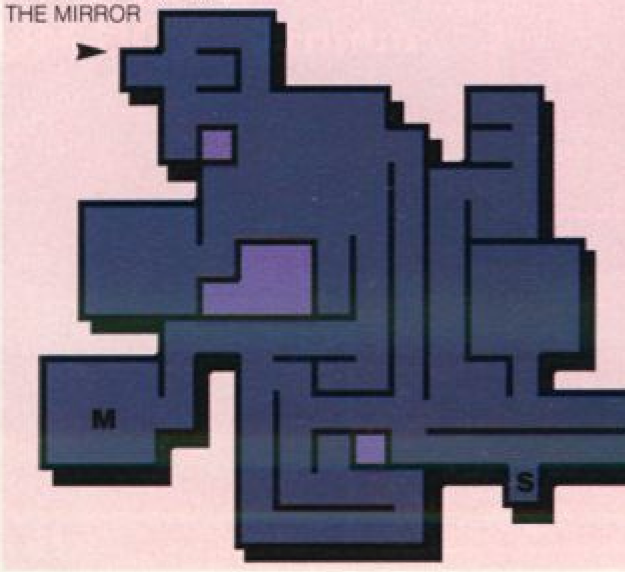
L = LORD OF ASSASINS. USE SCROLLS, ABOUT 2 ON HIM, IF NOT DEAD, THEN ATTACK HIM WITH WEAPON

LABYRINTH

KEY

S = START

M = MEDUSA. MAKE SURE YOU HAVE SOME ATTACKING SCROLLS LEFT, AND YOU HAVE THE MIRROR



Lord of the Dwarves, kill him, nick his goodies then go and kill the rock monster.

After you have the gem and other weapons and armour, make your way to the Forest of Elves. The people are friends but they carry good armour, potions and scrolls so it is best to kill them. The Lord of the Elves carries the Elven cloak and money; kill any body you see in the Forest of Elves.

It is best to go all round the Forest of Elves and kill anyone you see.

Now it is off to the Temple of Set. If your energy (health, strength, stamina) is low, go to an inn with two doors and buy some booze and healing. Then off to the temple. Make sure you have some attacking scrolls (death, fireball, etc.) for use against the high priestess.

Make sure you go all round, especially to the large area on the east side before you go down the stairs. Make sure you get the necklace.

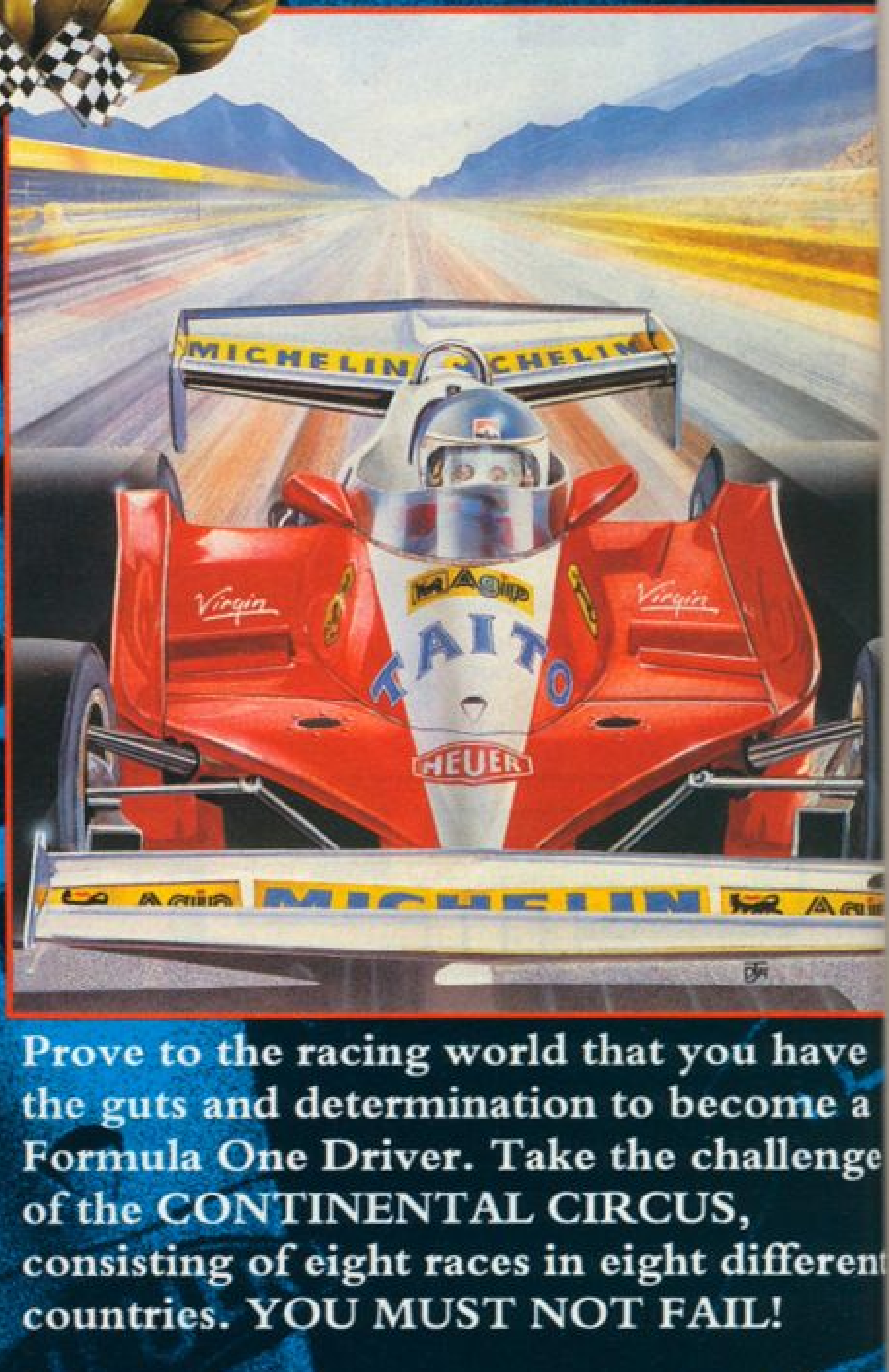
Make sure you have the cross. Now go to the castle. Go along the long corridor. On the way to Lich, when you're near it, you will see three ghost-type people standing in the room. Kill them, collect the gear, then carry on. Unlock the door and go in. The only one you have to kill is Lich (he looks the same as the three mentioned before). Nick his gear and teleport out. Go to the AG on the main map to build up money and weapons. Then go to AG2.

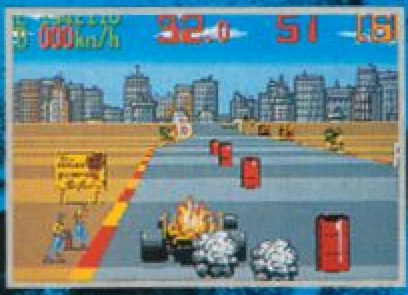
After you have got the other four gems you can then go to the Labyrinth. Use the wand to kill the minotaurs, make sure you get a key and a mirror off the minotaurs, as without the mirror the medusa will turn you to stone.

After killing the medusa get the gem, then teleport or find your way out. Then go back to the king and that's it, you've completed Galdregon's Domain!

It may look like David and Goliath, but with these ACE tips you're only a stones throw from success.

CONTINENTAL CIRCUS

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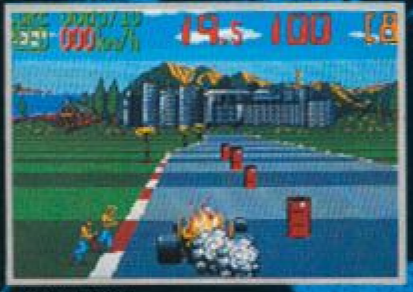
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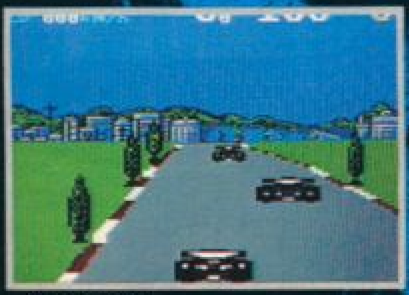
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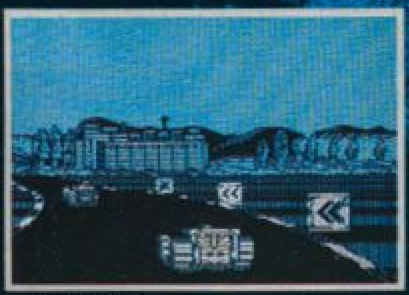
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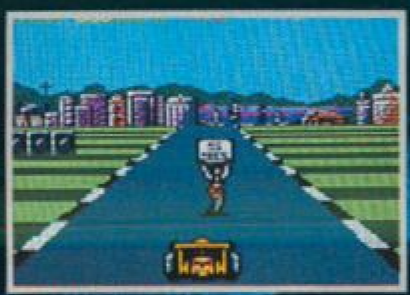
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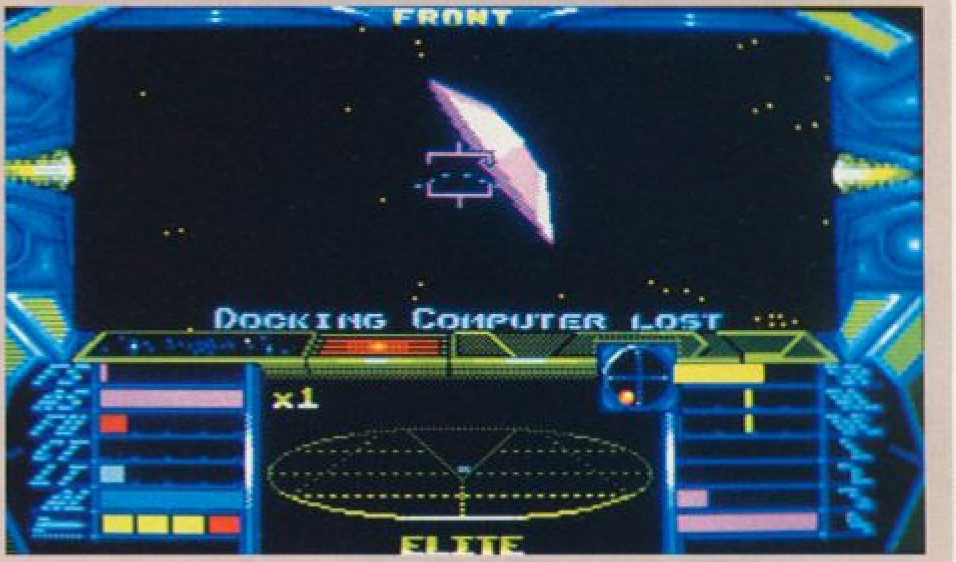
GOLDEN OLDIE - ELITE

Fans of *Elite* who are having trouble making much progress in this excellent game will be pleased to see this cheat from Marco Verhoeven in Holland. While it gives you a helping hand, it won't spoil the game for you.

When you want to jump more than the allowed range you should do the following:

Equip yourself with anything you need and launch. Outside the station choose galactic chart (**F5**) and click on a planet in the circle. When you move the mouse around and press '**D**' you get planets that aren't in your range. When you hyperspace click on a planet in your range and position the cursor on a planet you found with '**D**'. Now hyperspace and press '**D**'. It's a bit tricky because you can't use the mouse in hyperspace, so you'll have to choose a planet before you hyperspace.

My personal record is 112.4 light years. To accomplish this there's a slightly different method.



You'll have to choose a planet and click on local. Now the circle will be around the chosen planet. If you now press '**D**' you'll get much greater distances to jump. But still choose a planet within range and after that choose local.

OOPS!

Back in issue 25 we printed the solution to *Battletech* but forgot to tell you which master games player had provided it. Sorry! Slapped wrists all round. It was in fact Adam Morley of Leicester. A name to take note of because it's one you're likely to be seeing quite regularly in this column in the future. Since we neglected to credit Adam when his solution appeared here's a quick plug in recompense. Adam's first novel, *RAVEN*, has just been published, so if you liked his *Battletech* solution rush out to your local bookshop right now and head straight for the SF shelves...

BATTLETECH

CODE CRAZY

Steve Williams of Newton Aycliffe, County Durham helps out ailing games players with a few level codes.

THUNDERBIRDS
COUNTDOWN TO DISASTER

THUNDERBIRDS (AMIGA, ST, C64, AMSTRAD, & SPECTRUM)
PART:- 2> RECOVERY 3> ALOYSIUS 4> ANDERSON

NAVY MOVES (AMIGA & ST)
PART:- 2> 786169

SAVAGE (AMIGA & ST)
PART:- 2> SABATTA
3> PORSCHE

RICK DANGEROUS IS A CHEAT...

P. 'A megatip a day keeps the doldrums away' Fletcher says: 'Does getting through previous levels get tedious? Thought so. Just enter POOKY on the high score table and you are given the option to start on any level up to the furthest you can reach.' Well, now you know.

...AND SO IS SAVAGE HAWKEYE!

More help from Holland. This time it's for *Hawkeye* and *Savage* on the ST courtesy of Jan Jansen.

Hawkeye: Pause the game when playing, press the **HELP** key and start playing again by pressing the joystick button. Now you have infinite lives. If you press the + key on the keypad you will enter the next level.

Savage: Right at the beginning of game one (blue sector) you will find a well on the left. Run towards it and jump before you hit the wall. Now you will find yourself at the other side of it. Keep on walking to the left and you will notice the screen going crazy. Waggle the joystick in all directions and after a while you will find yourself in the red sector. Once in the red sector do the same as in the blue sector. Now you go to the purple sector. Do the same as in the red and blue sectors. A message appears that you have completed game one and the code word for game two is also shown there. That word is "**SABATTA**".

Hmmm! Sounds like a bug to me, but what the hell... it works! Thanks Jan, keep them coming.

WORLD GAMES ON THE CPC 464

And now, assistance for Amstrad gamers from Andrew Dalloway of Kinswinford in the West Midlands.

1 LOAD BARREL JUMPING.
2 SET THE BARRELS TO 20.
3 KEEP FIRE BUTTON PRESSED WHILE SKATER'S LEGS ARE BEING MOVED.
4 WHEN THE BLACK FLAG APPEARS AT THE EDGE OF THE SCREEN THE SKATER AUTOMATICALLY JUMPS.
5 KEEP THE FIRE BUTTON PRESSED WHILE THE SKATER JUMPS OVER THE FLAG.
6 PULL THE JOYSTICK DOWN WHEN THE SKATER BEGINS TO FALL (KEEP THE FIRE BUTTON PRESSED THE ENTIRE TIME).
7 THE SKATER LANDS IN FRONT OF THE BARRELS. YOU CAN TAKE YOUR FINGER OFF THE FIRE BUTTON NOW.

Can I? Oh good. Ever onwards...

CONSOLE CORNER

Yes folks, it's back again... that saviour of Console owners everywhere. The ultimate friend for firmware addicts. Yep, It's Console Corner.

In this month's corner we have some very comprehensive tips for Sega owners from the cunning console crew down in Caerphilly, Mid-Galmorgan: Jojo Cicero and Mark Cook.

R-TYPE

1.i To make your R-9 indestructable (before you turn on the power- base) press down-right on control pad 1 and press up-left and button 1. Do this simultaneously and hols them down until the R- Type logo appears on the screen. Now let go and start the game as usual.

ii To defeat **Krell** fire your droid unit into his stomach, then move up to the top eye and keep rapidly firing.

iii Gomanda. Collect the reflecting laser force, then move just above his blue eye and rapidly fire. If the snake gets close move to the top-left.

iv Mega Battleship. Collect the reflecting laser force and place it on your back. Move carefully around the ship and prepare a full laser beam. Wait until the generator peels back then let the beam in.

v Monpaira. Collect the reflecting laser force. Fit it on your back. Aim for the 90 degree angle and fire rapidly. The other two are straight forward, just aim for the green windows.

vi Kraken. Collect the anti-land laser force and prepare a full beam. When the rock appears, fire your beam and orb. Keep firing and dodging the rocks, this way he is easier to defeat.

vii There is no boss so collect the anti-air laser force. Move your R-9 to the backward "L" and position it so it is half and half. Let off the droid unit and keep firing. You should not get hit.

viii Buronka. Collect the anti-air laser force, put it on your back. Keep firing and dodging, it is easier to do this level like this.

xi Byde. You can collect any laser force here. Wait until he opens his mouth and fire your droid unit inside. Keep firing rapidly and dodging. You should defeat him easily.

2. To get to the super stage go to level 4 and when the mechanical cells fill the screen there are two pillars at the top. Reverse into the first pillar. The screen should flash and now you enter the super stage.

Super Stage Boss. Just aim for his eyes. These are his weakness. Watch out for the balls he fires out of his mouth.

3. To get the **soundtest**, rotate the D-button clockwise a couple of times. If you want sound effects press button 2 and press right on sound-test 17.

To gain extra **continues** rotate the D-button anti-clockwise on the continue option. You can gain a total of 12 continues.

VIGILANTE

TRICKS

To choose a round:- When the title screen is showing, press both buttons and up-left on CD1. Keep these down. Your round can now be selected by pressing up and down.

When fighting boss two, first go to the van and let him jump you. Then, no matter how far from you he is, and provided you duck and punch, he can be hit! (This only works when he is to your left).

TACTICS

The 'chokeholder' thugs can be jumped to avoid combat.

To fly-kick, press both buttons while running, then sharply press up, still holding buttons 1 and 2. To fly punch, repeat but press down as opposed to up.

PLAYER 1
ENEMY
TIME

If you get to a boss with no nunchakas you can safely go back for them with no thugs challenging you either way.

Level 1

1. Jump all chokeholders before fighting a knifer, chainman, etc.
2. To kill boss, grab nunchakas, hit him in the right corner and hit him rapidly. His energy diminishes more than normal.

Level 2

1. See level 1 tip 1.
2. To kill boss, use the aforementioned cheat, but as soon as you've had three hits in on him jump toward him and repeat the cheat!

Level 3

1. See level 1 tip 1.
2. Motorbikes — don't hit the riders off, just keep jumping them and moving forward and pretty soon they'll stop coming. Don't land in their smoke or their fires (after the bikes blow up) or you'll lose energy.

To kill boss, ignore his mace and jump into him. Duck and punch immediately. After two hits, jump back out and wait for him to run into you. Repeat the process.

Level 4

1. Guess what? Level 1. Tip 1.
2. To kill boss, dodge his dynamite and fly-punch him up on his ledge. When he jumps down, keep fly kicking him, running back, fly kicking him, etc. until he dies.

Level 5

1. Yep. Level 1...
2. To kill boss, grab nunchakas and duck. The boss will walk towards you and before he can kick you, hit him with the nunchakas. Repeat until he dies.

Thank you, thank you, thank you. Hopefully we shall be hearing a lot more from these two wizzes in future corners. Keep 'em peeled.

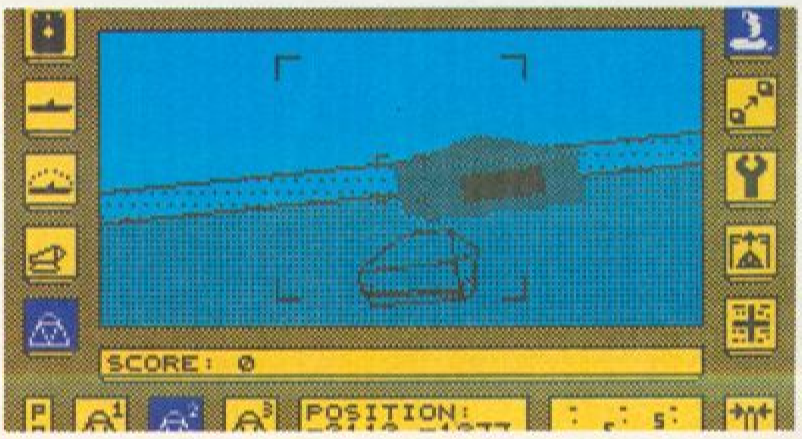
A SWEDISH CHEAT - CARRIER COMMAND

Pause the game and type "The Best is yet to Be". Now you are in the cheat mode.

9=SURPRISE
7=SPEED UP THE GAME
6=SHOW ALL THE COLOURS, ETC, IN THE GAME

Try also pressing **CTRL** and **M** for a surprise. Try also "Grow old along with me" and press "+". To go back in the normal game press "-".

Thanks to Joseph Musoke of Stockholm, Sweden for that little gem.



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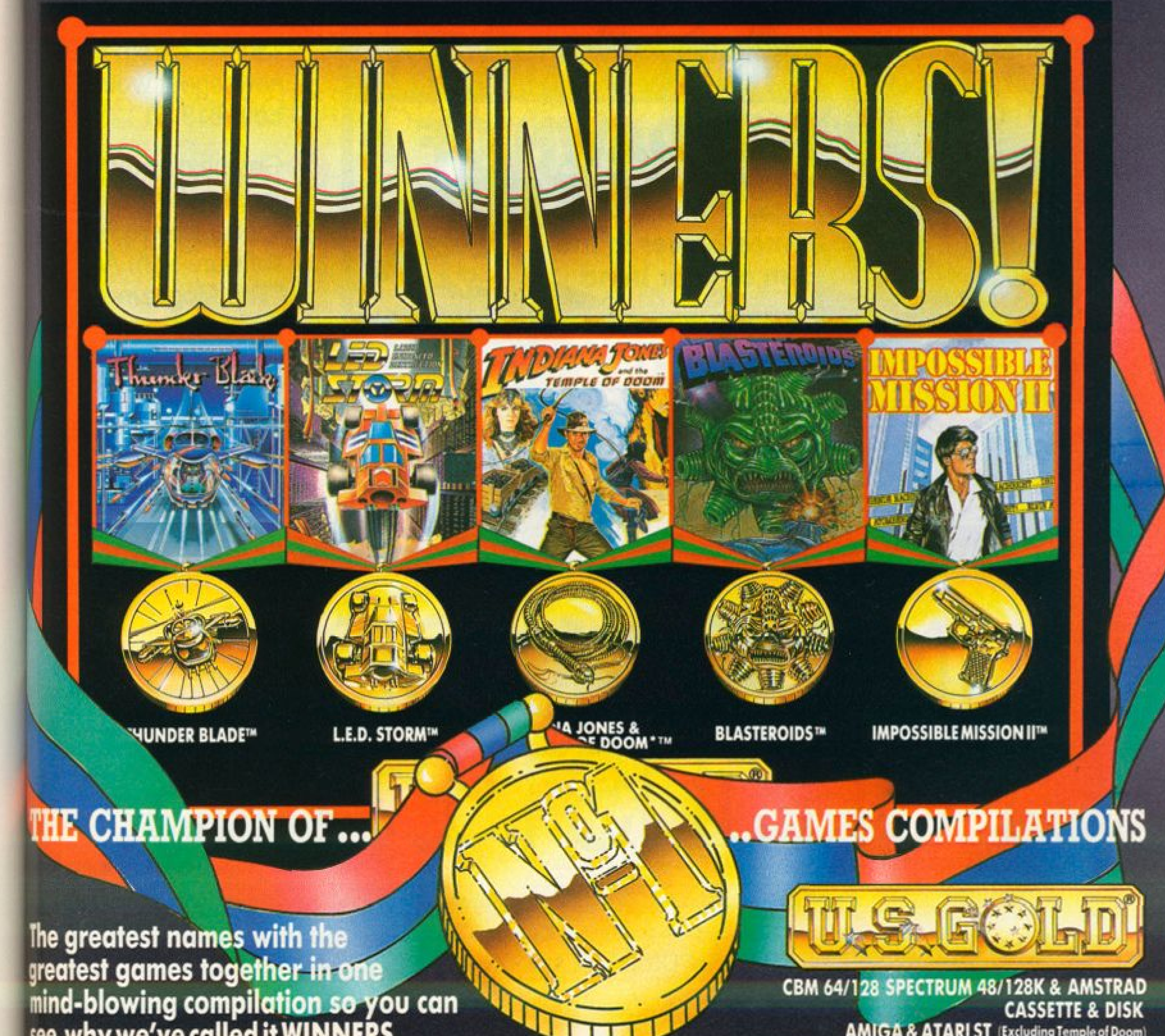
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COMPETITION

ACE AND ATARI HAVE A BRAND NEW LYNX HAND-HELD CONSOLE TO GIVE AWAY...

THAT'S HANDY!

Here's a chance to get your hands on the incredible Atari Lynx colour hand-held games console...

As revealed back in ACE Issue 23, the new Atari Lynx hand-held console in one of the sexiest games decks to be released in years, and now we give you the chance to own this handy piece of hardware, thanks to those generous guys at Atari.

The Lynx was first unveiled at the Summer Consumer Electronics Show in Chicago, where it astounded the gameplaying world with its impressive array of features and technical specifications.

The Atari Lynx is the world's first colour hand-held games console with a 3.5" LCD screen, resolution of 160x102 pixels, processor running at 16MHz, 64K DRAM, 16 megabyte game carts, multi-player options and custom graphics and sound chips producing 16 colours on screen out of a palette of 4096 and four channel stereo sound.

Among the games due for release on the Lynx are *California Games* and *Impossible Mission* and *Treasure Chests* – plus a myriad of other game titles from third party developers.

Although the Lynx was launched last month in the States, Atari won't be releasing it in the UK till early next year... but ACE readers don't have to worry or wait, because you can WIN a LYNX now by entering our simple competition.

LIFE 49880
SPEED 28
STRENGTH 3
MISSILES 3
CHARISMA 2
LEVEL 1

WHAT YOU HAVE TO DO...

Winning the Atari Lynx couldn't be simpler! In fact, it's as simple as 1, 2, 3...

1. What year was Atari founded?

   (a) 1972 (b) 1967 (c) 1901

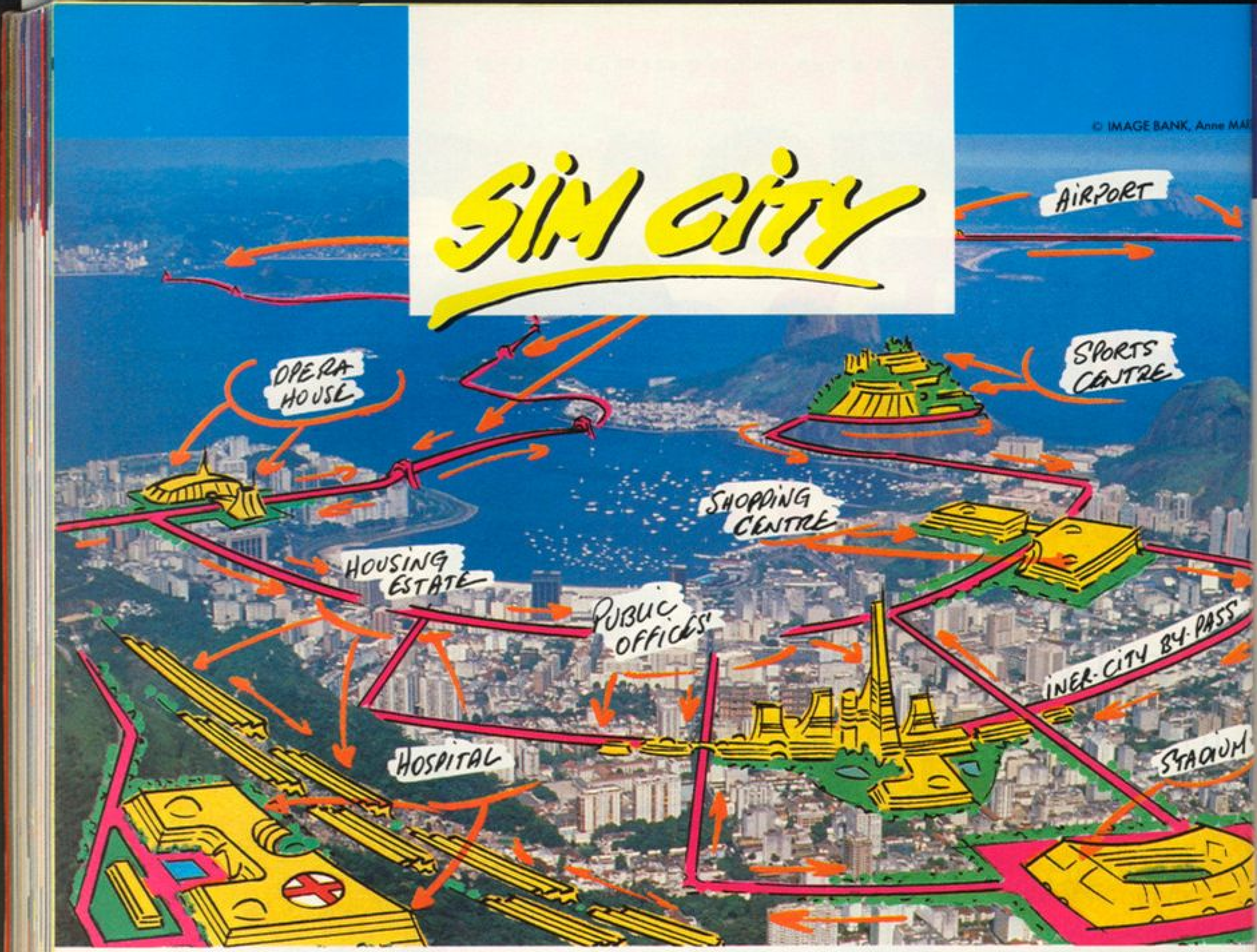
2. What computer, console or coin-op game would you like to see converted to the Atari Lynx? Why?

3. And finally... we want you to give us a gameplaying tip for your all-time favourite game – it can be on computer, console or coin-op. For example: Have you found a hidden cheat mode or a bug? What about a well tested tactic to get past that difficult part? Is there a secret level?

Please write your answers (in BLOCK CAPITALS) on the back of a postcard. Don't forget to include your full name, address and telephone number.

Send your completed postcard to:
ACE LYNX COMPETITION, Priory Court, 30-32 Farringdon Lane, London EC1R 3AU.

THE PRIZE
The Atari Lynx will be awarded to the first correct entry drawn at random from those received prior to the closing date.


SIM CITY
AIRPORT
SPORTS CENTRE
OPERA HOUSE
SHOPPING CENTRE
HOUSING ESTATE
PUBLIC OFFICES
INER-CITY BY-PASS
HOSPITAL
STADIUM

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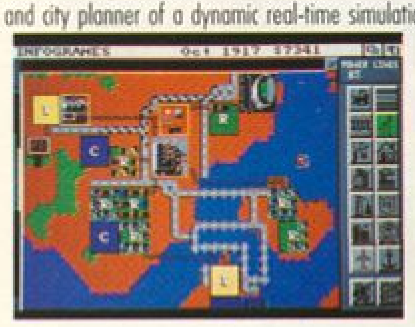
RIO DE JANEIRO 2019.

SIM CITY

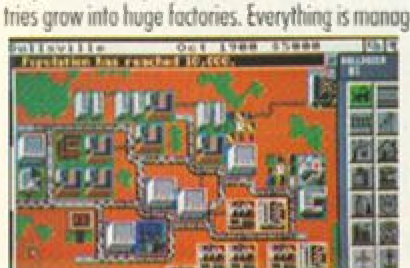
What you should know about the game of the year.

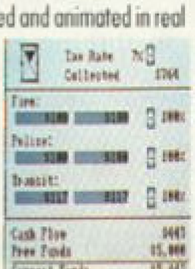
On seeing the crumbling estates, out-dated roads and rusty bridges of your city, how many times have you said "Put me in charge for a day and I'll make this wretched thing work!"
Now, with Sim City, take the destiny of the world's greatest cities in hand. Or take charge of a new evolving and growing city. Become both mayor and city planner of a dynamic real-time simulation.

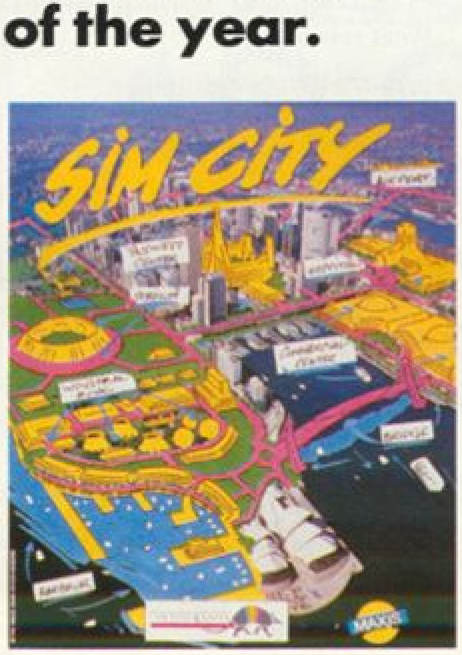

INFOGRAMES Oct 1917 $7341

MAX
MIN
Population

Build houses, streets, factories, airports, a stadium, or even nuclear power plants. Organise urban transport, hire police, firemen, bulldoze entire neighbourhoods.
Raise and collect taxes, balance your budget, manipulate property values. Sim City is alive. It's loaded with animation and detailed sound effects. Build roads, cars appears. Lay tracks, trains go. Build an airport, planes fly. Neighbourhoods go upper-class. Areas deteriorate into slums. Small industries grow into huge factories. Everything is managed and animated in real time. Every decision instantly influences the life of your town.
In a special mode, you can even cause tornadoes, floods, fires and other disasters at your whim. Save San Francisco from the great earthquake of 1906. Or save Tokyo of pollution and from his famous B-movie monster. Sim City is an all-absorbing unique game which contains 8 pre-defined scenarios : e.g San Francisco, Tokyo, Rio de Janeiro... With it's exceptional depth of play, it's still simple to play with icons and graphics, without text commands.


Bullsville Oct 1900 $5000
Population has reached 10,000.


Tax Rate
Collected
Fire:
Police:
Transit:
Cash Flow
Prev Funds
Current Funds
Go With These Figures


SIM CITY
MAXIS

RES
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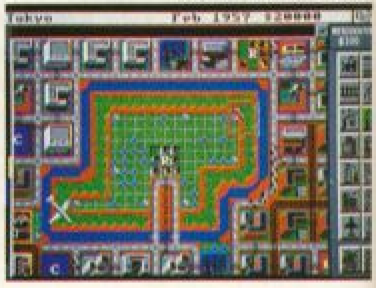
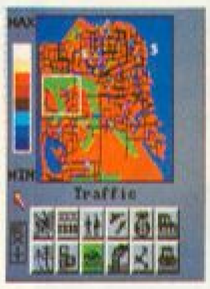
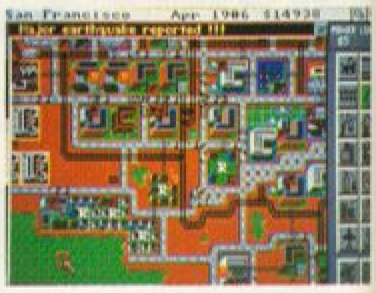
120 YEARS
Return to Editor


Tokyo Feb 1957 $20000


MAX
MIN
Traffic


San Francisco Apr 1906 $14938
Major earthquake reported !!!

Design and build the city of your dreams. Sim City gives you the keys. The rest is up to you.

INFOWORLD Volume II Issue 20 : "People playing Sim City are completely plugged into the world they create, disappearing for hours."
NEW YORK TIMES : "The model is very sophisticated, yet understandable. And just as important, it's fun, too."

MAXIS INFOGRAMES

UP-BEATS

JON BATES REVEALS NEW MUSICAL DEVELOPMENTS AT THE PC SHOW

What's new in the world of computer music? Cards for the PC, bolt-ons for all micros, sexy new software, and a system that could, if used to its full potential, set you back £2500 just for the MIDI leads! Jon Bates tunes in to this year's PC Show...

If you were one of the hordes who attended this year's PC show at Earls Court then you could not escape the fact that music software was out in force. Once you had negotiated your ears past the lethal bombarding of the multitude of games they were subject to further battering from the music area (unimaginatively called the Music and Micros area); a whole section of stands, each one with soft and hardware plus synths and samplers all set at stun volume. To cap it all, Atari had a huge bank of TV screens backing a stage with feature regular demonstrations of the new Steinberg sequencing package, Cubase from Tony Hastings (ex Cutting Crew). Here's what went down...

BOLT ON BOOGIE...

Ever since someone first complained about the Spectrum's sound chip (probably the first person to own a Spectrum), hardware manufacturers have been selling us little bolt-on goodies that will enhance the musical performance of our micros. In recent months these add-ons have been reappearing for the new 16-bit market and some of them are very impressive indeed. 8-bit owners needn't despair either as several of these new units are simply modified MIDI kit that can be driven by any MIDI equipped micro, whether it be an Amstrad CPC plus EMR interface or a RAM Music Machine'd Spectrum.

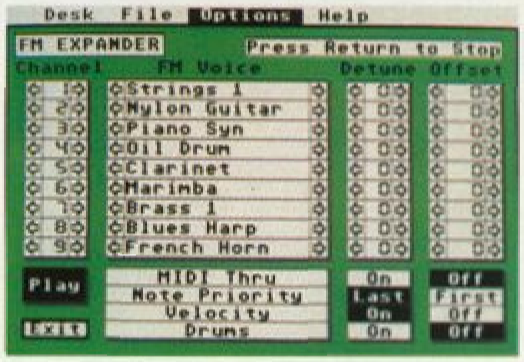
FM MELODY MAKER

Although designed for the ST only, this little beast shows the degree of crossover we're seeing now between the dedicated music market and the computer scene. Marketed by Hybrid Arts, the package consists of a cartridge that plugs into the side port on the ST and comes with playback and recording software.

The cartridge contains a sound chip that uses the same method of sound creation as the very successful Yamaha DX series of synthesisers, Frequency Modulation. It will give you up to 11 sounds simultaneously, which includes a drum kit. To get the best from the unit it would be best to have both an external amplifier and a MIDI keyboard. The latter then plugs into the computers MIDI IN port and allows you to play any of the voices contained on the chip.

The recording software will let you play anything in and multi-track your performance into something chartable (optimism rules OK) and is an ideal entry level program into the world of sound and MIDI.

The package also has good MIDI facilities that will allow you to control and play other synths connected to the MIDI out port. Not bad for £69.95. Like many of the MIDI add-ons it can also be incorporated into games and there are several titles in preparation that will be able to use the cartridge as an extra sound generator.



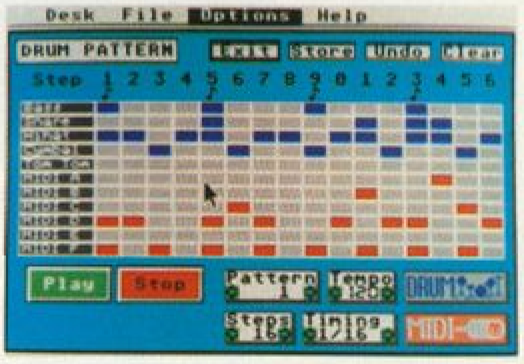
FM EXPANDER

Press Return to Stop

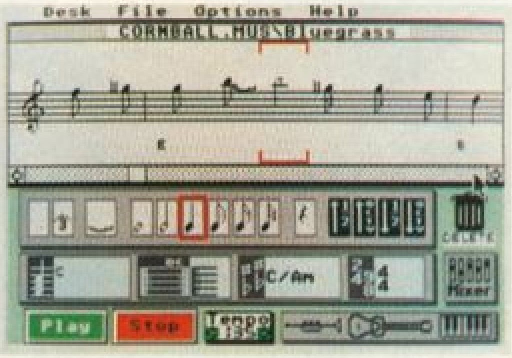
Channel	FM Voice	Detune	Offset
1	Strings 1	00	00
2	Nylon Guitar	00	00
3	Piano Syn	00	00
4	Oil Drum	00	00
5	Clarinet	00	00
6	Marimba	00	00
7	Brass 1	00	00
8	Blues Harp	00	00
9	French Horn	00	00

MIDI Thru	On	Off
Note Priority	Last	First
Velocity	On	Off
Drums	On	Off

The FM Melody Maker from Hybrid Arts has plenty of options to customise the sounds. Each one can be assigned to a separate MIDI channel.



Setting up a drum pattern with FM Melody Maker. The grid rolls from left to right and each filled-in square represents a drum beat on the instrument listed on the left.



Sequencing on FM Melody Maker uses traditional music notation as well. Note the mixer in the lower left-hand corner which lets you balance the individual volumes of the sounds.

ROCK AND ROLAND...

Undoubtedly some of the sexiest bolt-on bits at the show were coming out of the Roland stable. Ever since this company released its popular little MT32 sound module, a whole market of home computer users demanding quality sound sources on the cheap has sprung up.

To satisfy demand, Roland have put out a new range of synth modules designed specifically to run with all MIDI software and computers. Although not cheap by computer hardware standards, they are in effect repackaged versions of two of their most successful sound modules, the D110 LA synth (a beefier, rack-mounted MT32-alike) and the U110 sample player, both renowned for their excellent sounds.

The CM32L corresponds to the D110 and has 128 sounds plus 30 percussion voices and

BLASTS WHILE YOU BLAST

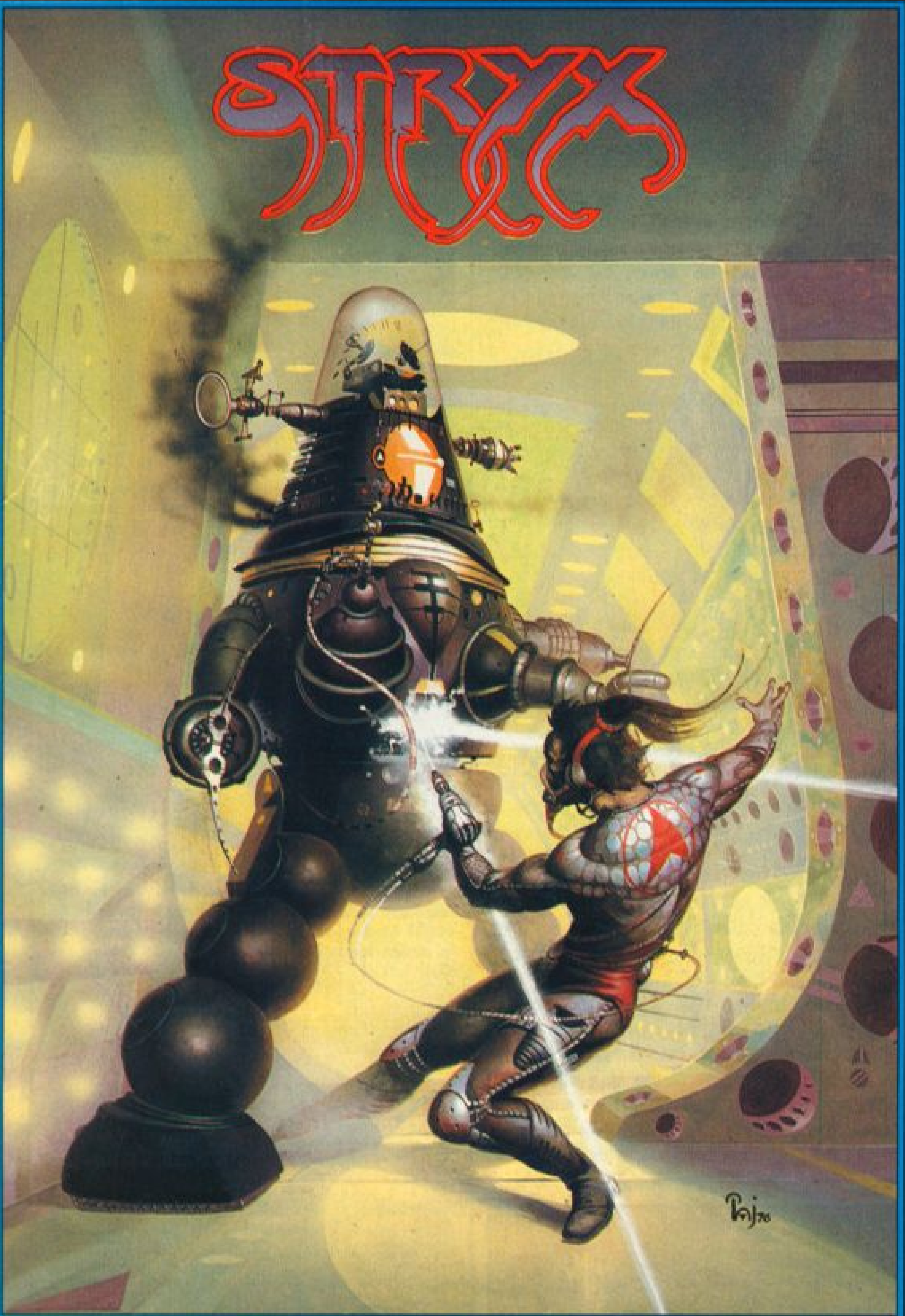
King's Quest IV not sounding quite right? Want to beef up your games performance with a spot of heavy duty sound? Several of the units mentioned on these pages will respond to data dished out by some of today's top games, giving you a full stereo soundtrack.

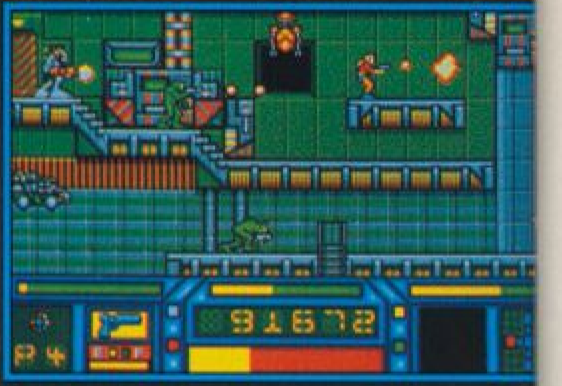
The FM Melody Maker is, we are told, going to be supported by several software houses, and Sierra On Line already support the MT32, Yamaha Music Feature PC card, and the Casio CZ series. Compatible software is also promised for the Games Blaster (as its name suggests) mentioned in this article.

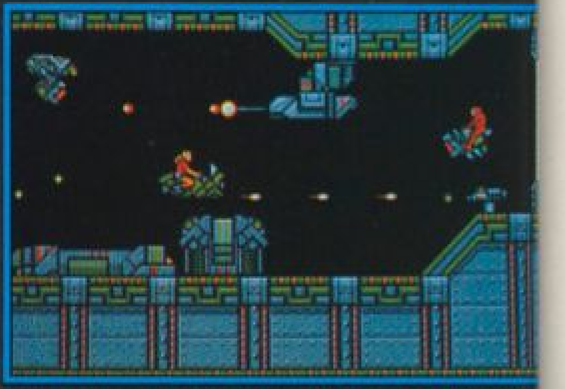
As you can see on these pages, prices for these units vary enormously, but if you're in the unfortunate position of tightening the belt on your piggy bank, you can at least take heart from the current trend, obvious on virtually every stand at the show and exemplified by recent releases such as Blood Money from Psygnosis, Rock and Roll from Rainbow Arts (see this issue), and Xenon II, for improving radically the quality of games sound tracks in general. Most of this is currently being done by using sampling, and new techniques for storing and compressing sound data mean that the music we hear while we slaughter the Andopoids will continue to develop dramatically over the next year.

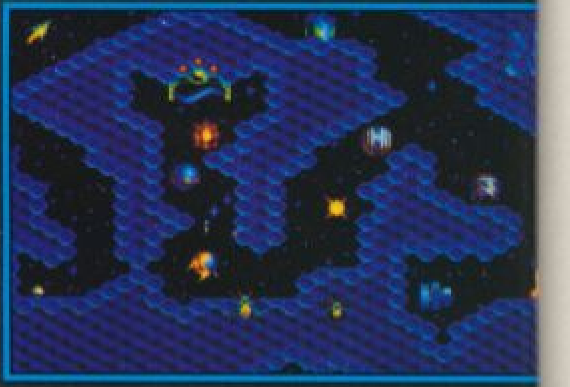
Tool:Line V:0 P:0 C:0 X=254 Y=8 Pri:0

Sierra On-Line's titles now come with glorious full-stereo MIDI sound tracks...









PSYCLAPSE

- ★ ***Ultra smooth 8 way scrolling***
- ★ ***Designed with small fully animated characters from Garvan Corbett, the artist who brought you the classic hit Barbarian***
- ★ ***Multi-directional free format weapon usage***
- ★ ***Large playfield for even more action.***

You're really up against it this time. Those revolting robots have finally upped and turned their horribly powerful weapons on their kind human masters.
Someone's got to stop it before it all gets out of hand. I mean, you just can't have bloodthirsty Cyborg assassins roaming the streets of Dome City and expect the citizens to put up with it. Who on earth is going to sort out the mess? You guessed – you get the job.

Fortunately, you are just a little bit on the special side. You are Stryx, the product of Project Alpha Secure, the meanest fighting, smartest thinking machine ever invented. Half-man, half-robot, you are the business, the only one who can stop those wicked Cyborgs.

You'll have to work hard, though, blasting hordes of the revolting creatures (such a sad waste of scrap metal) and rescuing the keys to the Lifeforce.

So, Stryx, you'd better get your jet pack on for some high level robot stomping through the immensely complex underground world of the Dome cities. It's a tough assignment, and time is running out.

AMIGA/ATARI ST £19.95

Screen Shots from the Atari ST Version

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PSYGNOSIS

GAMES PEOPLE PLAY

33 sound effects plus adjustable digital reverb. This will set you back £369 but after all you are getting up to nine channels of professional quality sounds simultaneously. An equivalent synth keyboard, for example, would cost you around £800.

The CM32P inherits the role of the U110 and will perform six simultaneous parts of sampled sound with 64 sounds available, giving you a maximum of 31 notes at any one time. More sounds can be obtained by the greedy by purchasing sound cards which will cost £45 each in addition the £445 you have splashed out on the unit. For £749 you can have both modules in one box (the CM64) and a row with your bank manager.

Roland CM-64
LA/PCM SOUND MODULE

Roland's CM64 – not many knobs, but wodges of sound, and all under computer control. More and more games are outputting MIDI sountracks – a unit like this could put quite a punch into your playing...

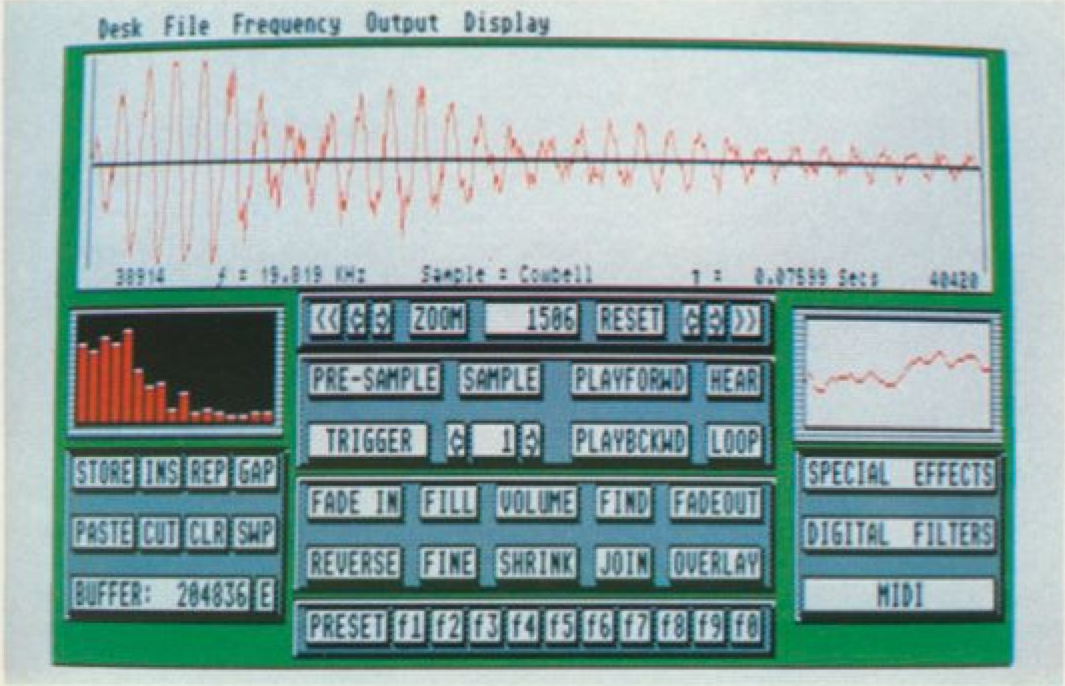
SAMPLING SAFARI

Samplers, those devices that digitally capture sound, let you edit it, and then play it back, are set to fall dramatically in price following the news that Cheetah, who have been pioneering a budget end of the market with low-cost keyboards, drum machines, and an analogue sound module, are now stabbing out at the sample market.

On offer will be a 16-bit dedicated sampler for under £800. This may sound a lot but the spec is comparable to units costing a very great deal more. The beast (displayed at PCS but not in operation) is a stand-alone number and not dependent on any computer to drive or edit it. It comes complete with a 3.5" drive and has the ability to play back multiple samples, as well as supporting a full MIDI specification. It will also accept disks from 'certain other' samplers. Should put the cat amongst the sample pigeons early next year...

REPLAY REPLAY

Meanwhile, through Microdeal and the indefatigable Tony Racine, the man behind many a sampling program, there is a refined version of Replay now in its fifth version and called Replay Professional, costing £129.95 for the ST only. Its advantages over previous versions will be that the sound editing features are made much easier and simpler to use, the sound filters are greatly enhanced, and, most importantly of all, the sound is actually sampled in 12 bits and crunched down to 8 bits for the ST to store.

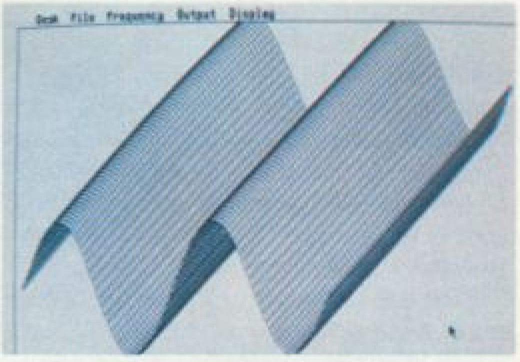

Desk File Frequency Output Display
38914 f = 19.819 KHz Sample = Cowbell T = 0.07599 Secs 40420
<< ZOOM 1586 RESET >>
PRE-SAMPLE SAMPLE PLAYFORWD HEAR
TRIGGER 1 PLAYBCKWD LOOP
STORE INS REP GAP
PASTE CUT CLR SWP
BUFFER: 204836 E
FADE IN FILL VOLUME FIND FADEOUT
REVERSE FINE SHRINK JOIN OVERLAY
PRESET f1 f2 f3 f4 f5 f6 f7 f8 f9 f0
SPECIAL EFFECTS
DIGITAL FILTERS
MIDI

The main control screen of *Replay Professional.* The main sample covers the upper half of the screen whilst a harmonic analysis is displayed on the lower left and filtering characteristics on the right.

Without going into great technical detail, the bottom line here is that the sound will be much smoother than before and will have a lot less background hiss. The new version will also allow you to play back four separate sounds simultaneously. Thrown in for good measure will be a sample sequencing program and also a MIDI keyboard with a reasonable degree of sophistication.

Heavy-duty ST sample freaks could check out the A16S Samplerack – a professional piece of hardware that comes as a separate lump all ready to bolt into a rack. Needless to say it works in stereo, comes with a sequencer and full MIDI features plus all the bells and whistles that you would expect for a shade under £600. This may seem very expensive, but you would probably pay considerably more than this for a separate sampling device and you would certainly not have the editing facilities that the A16S can give you. One for the serious purchaser though.

ST owners could also try out Quartet from Microdeal. For £49.95 you get a piece of software that will play up to four sampled voices simultaneously and will store up to 20 samples in memory, dependent on the length of each one. It uses samples that are in the same format as the Replay range and there are plenty of these available in the Public domain if you can't create your own using the Replay package. The program also includes sequencing and graphic sample editing facilities.



Replay Professional – no, it's not Origami with graph paper but a three dimensional display (fast Fourier transform) of a sine wave sample.

MUSIC-X JUNIOR

Rumours abound that the all-encompassing Music X sequencing, sampling, and voicing program (reviewed last month) will soon be available in smaller and hence cheaper forms. The word is that SDL will be making a Junior version available for under £100. Having got you hooked on that you can then save up and buy the additional software modules to add to the program and build up to the full version. It's a bit like a Lego kit – you stat with Junior and build your dog kennel; finally you end up with Master Builder edition that will construct a fully-working model of the Space Shuttle in your bedroom.

INTO THE FUTURE

Apart from the move towards improving the sound quality of games and a desire to sample anything that so much as squeaks, the other interesting trend at the PC Show was the development of the multi-tasking or interactive environment for the computer.

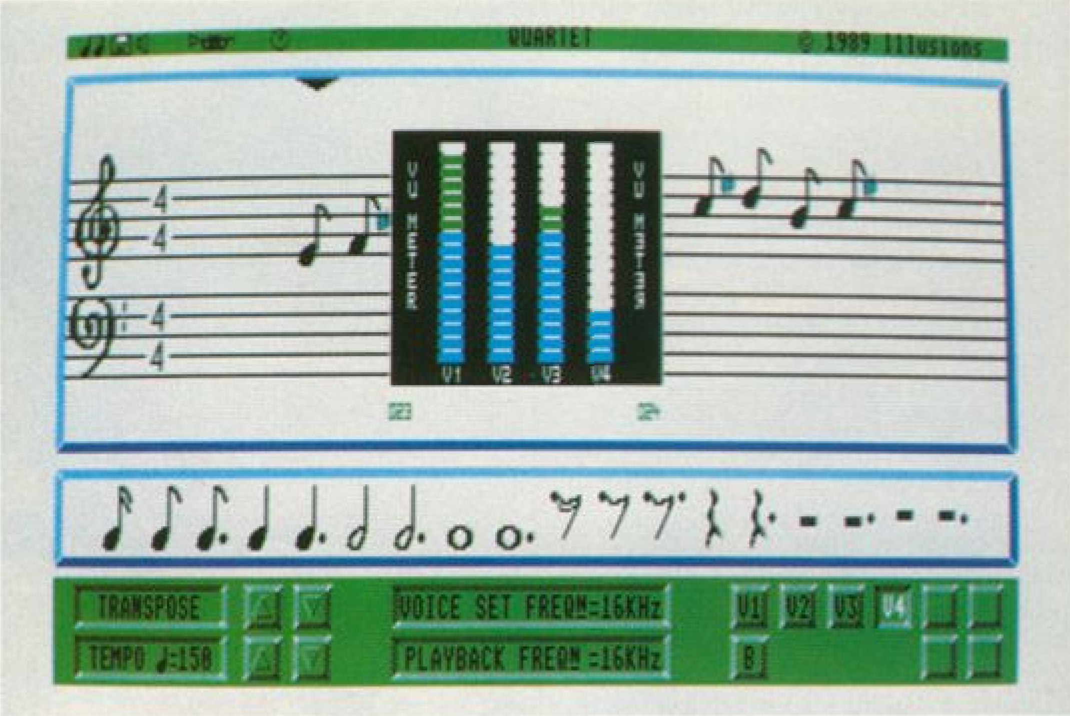
Whilst it has been possible for several programs to share the memory space and let you jump from one to the other, it has not neces-

CROTCHETS...

Wandering round the show, every so often something crops up that makes you think twice..or thrice...

Such as Pandora Technology's Archimedes program that allows you to control up to 250 MIDI instruments simultaneously. Always supposing that you could actually afford 250 MIDI instruments, this sounds pretty nifty. But then suddenly the thought crops up...wait a moment: a single MIDI lead can set you back as much as £10. Anyone out there want to spend £2500 on leads??!

..or what about the chap who sidled up to us while we listened to Steinberg's Cubase being demoed and offered us a pirated version, less dongle, for under a quarter of the price. Sounds great, until you realise that (a) it won't store the sound in the proper format and (b) certain functions will therefore seize up and (c) you will then lose your work and (d) Steinberg will not be altogether happy to get you out of the mess and (e) it won't work with any of the upgrades. Suddenly the bargain sounds a wee bit pricey...



Mixing and sequencing the sampled sounds on Quartet.

sarily been the case that an action performed on one program will also affect the reaction of another program, which is in fact running simultaneously in the background.

The usual example quoted by the developers of these systems is where you are playing a tune from a MIDI sequencer and you decide that the sound of the synth is not quite right. Quick as a flash you jump to the synthesiser sound editor which is also running at the same time as the sequencer. Without a pause for breath you are able to change the synth sound and hear the effect. The main controls for either program can be overlaid onto each other.

The initial reaction is that this may all be well and good for those who have pots of filthy lucre to waste but is it a case of a solution looking for a problem? Whilst at present this may appear to be the case, the history of computer developments shows that things get spun off down the range and are subject to a good deal of refining in the process.

At present there are several companies developing and marketing such systems specifically for MIDI and music; Steinberg with M.ROS, C Lab with SoftLink and Hybrid Arts who are marketing a system called CHAOS. With the exception of M.ROS they are destined for the ST only. M.ROS is also being developed for the PC and the Mac.

The general consensus of opinion is that with such common operating systems controlling programs it is possible to have two or more computers interlinked, both running separate music programs that in all probability will be written by different software developers. As faster and more powerful computers arrive your will not feel forced to send your present workhorse to that great knackers' yard in the sky on the grounds that it cannot compete. Rather, it can be networked into the multitasking system and not merely synchronised but actually act and react with the other units, thanks to a common operating system. And with a bit of luck your present software will not become redundant but will be part of a bigger, ever developing mega-system.

CONTACTS

Hybrid Arts	01 883 1335
Microdeal	0726 68020
Data Liberation Ltd	0983 864674
Roland	01 568 4578
Cheetah	0222 555525
EMR	0702 335747
Pandora Technology	01 221 9653
SDL	01 300 3399
Steinberg (Evenlode)	099 389 228
C-Lab (Sound Technology)	0462 480000

PLAY YOUR CARDS...

If you've got a PC, you can now choose from one of several cards available for the machine, each of which offers the chance of boosting your musical street cred. The trend for these cards started with the Yamaha Music Feature card, effectively a DX synth on a card, but it was rather expensive. There are now several cheaper alternatives...

GAMES BLASTER

The Games Blaster is a half size card, not amazingly cheap at £119 (the US version is only $129 - a pretty shameful exchange rate which deserves to start a vigorous grey import market). It can play back 12 sounds simultaneously but delivers the sound at only 2.5 watts. This may be OK over headphones but through stereo speakers (not provided) it is positively weedy. You will need to hook it through a hi-fi system to give it any credibility. The sounds aren't bad, using a s simple form of Frequency Modulation for their creation.

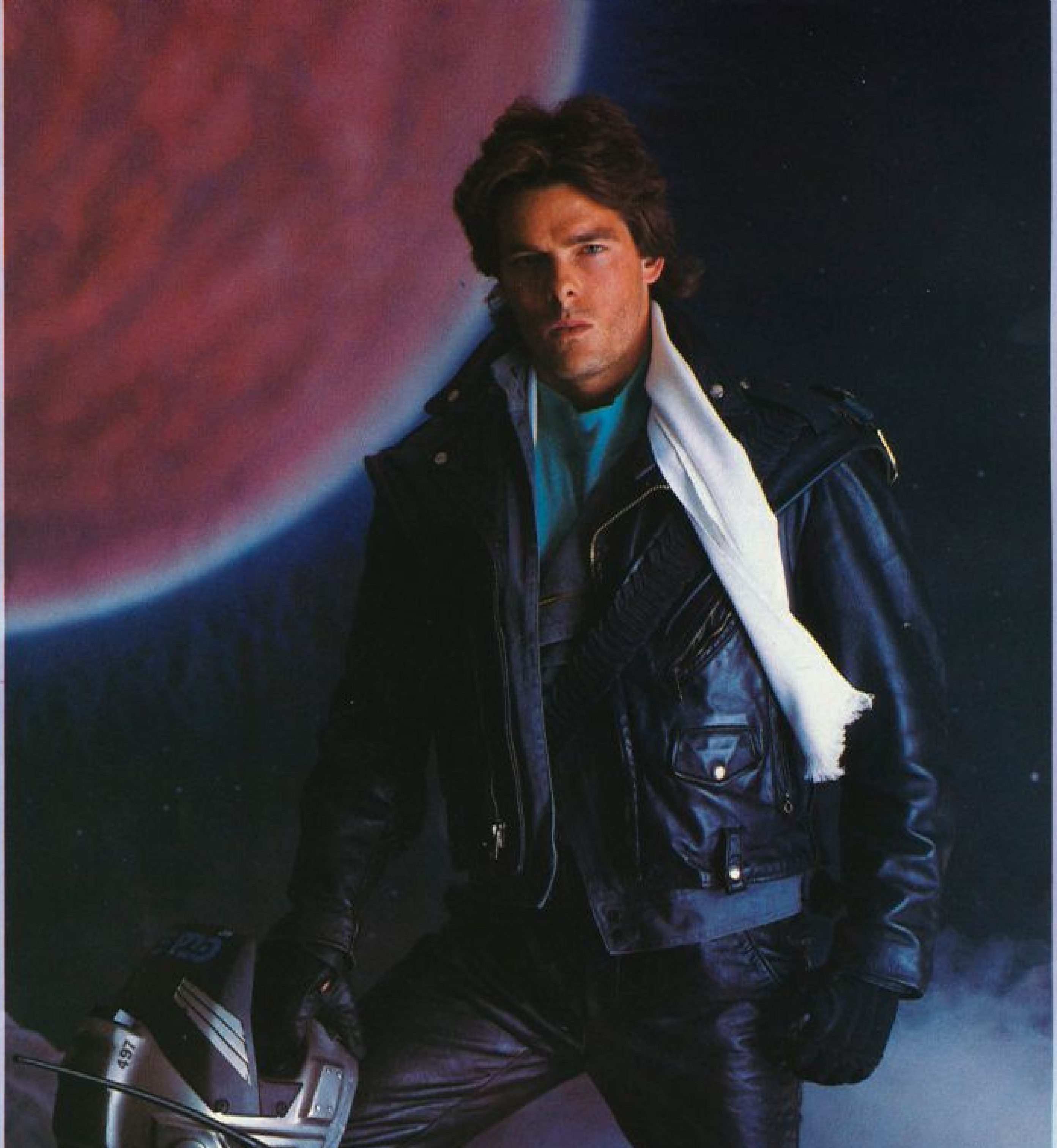
There are plans afoot to release an upgraded version of the Games Blaster in the not too distant future which, although costing more, will have greatly enhanced sound capabilities, using FM plus the ability to sample sound. The upgrade, entitled Sound Blaster, was having its first airing at the show and was an improvement in many ways on its predecessor. As well as running with compatible games it supports MIDI and comes with a whole host of software to turn the PC into a sort of single keyboard with lots of auto-playing features and libraries of jolly tunes to sing along with! Watch this space for further details _ and more information from Data Liberation Limited (contact numbers at the end of this article).

LAPC-1

An expensive beast this, but still an attractive proposition for well-heeled and musically inclined PC owners, the LAPC-1 is a full-size card that is in effect the more elderly and popular MT- 32 sound module. This beast gives you digital reverb as well as loads of excellent sounds and 32 note polyphony (using simple sounds - the polyphony reduces as you create more complex voices). However, you'd probably need to measure the benefits in terms of desk top space rather than finance as the card will cost £379 and if you shop around you cant get an MT32 (which is around three years old now) for about £200 second hand.

PC REPLAY

Sampling freaks might like to check out PC Replay, a half-size card which also includes a MIDI interface plus all the ports required for happy sampling. It'll set you back £149.95 and you should make sure you've got a hard disk as well otherwise it will eat its way through available memory



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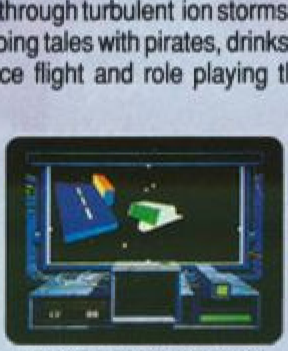
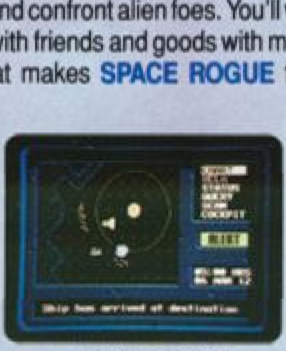


IBM/COMPATIBLE VERSION



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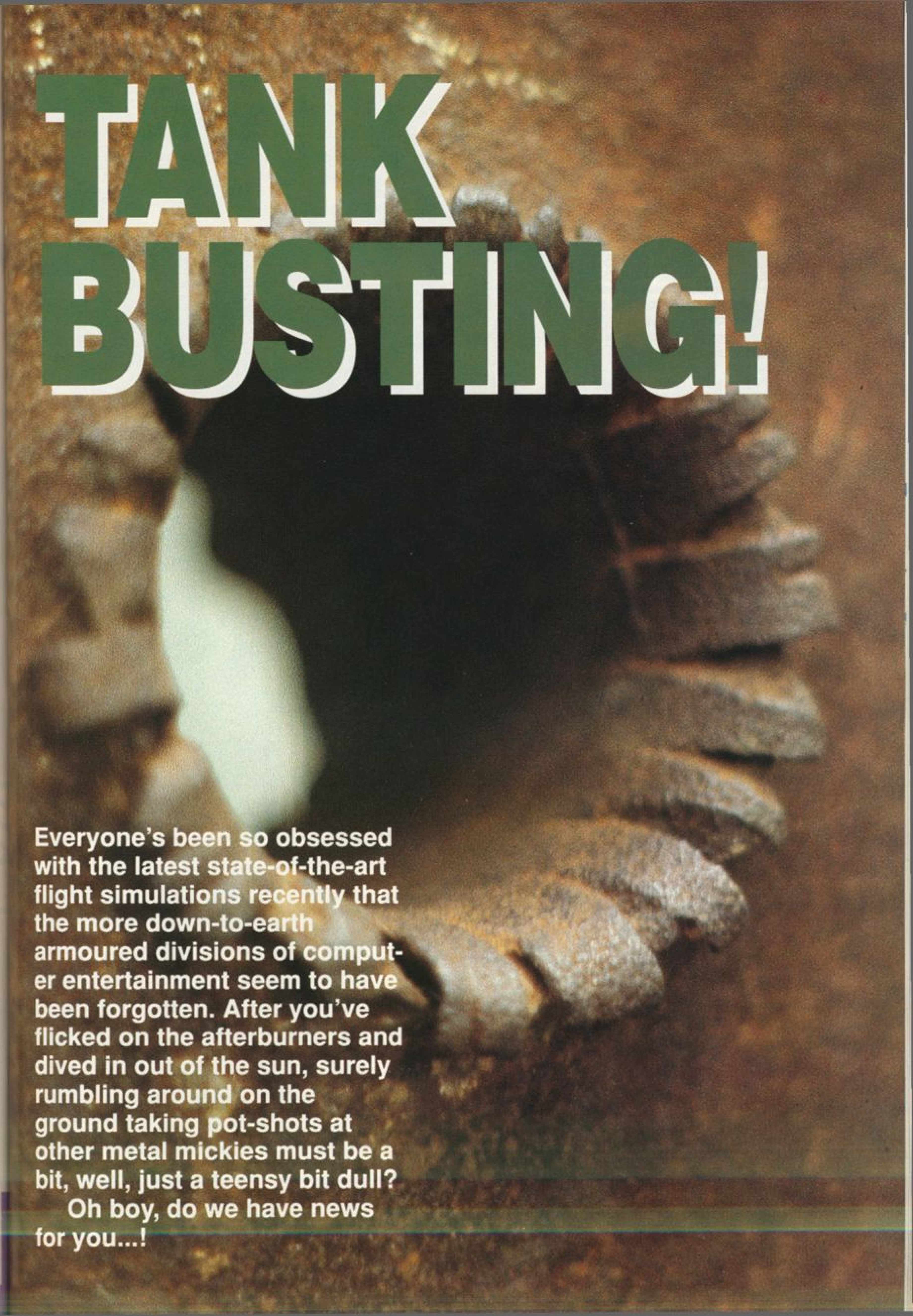


TANK BUSTING!

Everyone's been so obsessed with the latest state-of-the-art flight simulations recently that the more down-to-earth armoured divisions of computer entertainment seem to have been forgotten. After you've flicked on the afterburners and dived in out of the sun, surely rumbling around on the ground taking pot-shots at other metal mickies must be a bit, well, just a teensy bit dull?

Oh boy, do we have news for you...!

FORE
Challenger 2

Advanced tank design, as on this recent example, is particularly suited to advanced 3D displays! The angular shielding, designed to deflect as well as resist bombardment, has a nice filled vector look even in real life! M1TP offers a high degree of detail in the display, but you can toggle the level of detail to suit different machines. The more detail, the more processing power you need...

Anyone who remembers the shock of seeing their windscreen shatter after receiving a shell up the rear in *Battlezone* will know that tank busting can result in almost terminal adrenalin doses – and the good news is that the software boys are about to ram this lesson home with several promised heavy-duty tank simulations. Microprose's is the first to appear, Realtime's *Tank Command* is poised for release, and there are others rumbling along the track. What's all the fuss about?

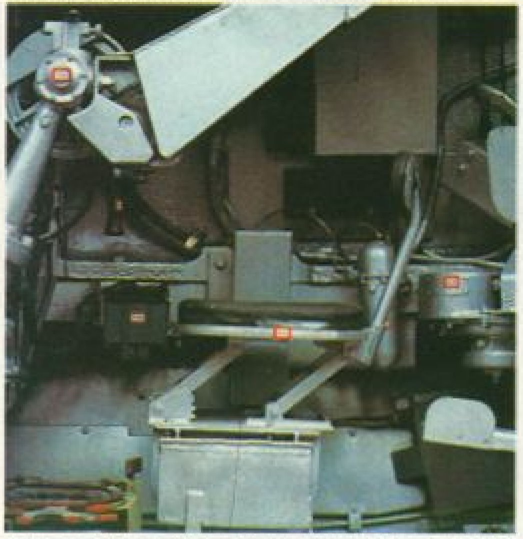
ACE first got its hands on a copy of Microprose's M1 Tank Platoon during a visit to the Bovington Tank Museum in the company of 'Prose's Major 'Wild Bill' Stealey. We were pretty impressed by the speed of the game, the detailed 3D VGA display, the choice of heavyweight armour you could fling about, and the even heavier weight 206pp manual, which must be getting on for an industry record.

In fact the manual just about sums up the new era of tank sims. Things may be slower on the ground, but that simply means more opportunity for strategy and game detail. None of those 206 pages are wasted, and every one tells you something useful about the game – yet it's a tribute to the program design in M1 Tank Platoon that you can get down to playing immediately. What's more, the detail in the game, which ranges from the explanation of and opportunity to indulge in conventional tank tactics to the muzzle velocity of the 7.62mm PKT Medium Machine Gun, isn't fiction – Microprose had to invoke the Freedom Of Information Act in the States to get the necessary documentation released, and they've made excellent use of it.

Our only niggle here was the quality of the manual binding, which appeared to shed pages at an alarming rate. The manual's pretty essential, however, so we ended up hole-punching all the pages and popping them in a ring binder.

THE GAME

M1TP revolves around your choice of platoon, your choice of men, and your choice of conflict scenario. Stored on disk (and updated every time you play) is a roster of platoons, each one featuring different names and associated skill ratings. Your average tank comes equipped with a tank commander sticking his head out of the hatch, a gunner who guns, a loader who loads, and a driver who keeps the 57.1 tonnes of heavy metal thundering across the 3D terrain at speeds of up to 67kph – an unnerving experience for the uninitiated who thought that tanks, well, sort of trundled along.

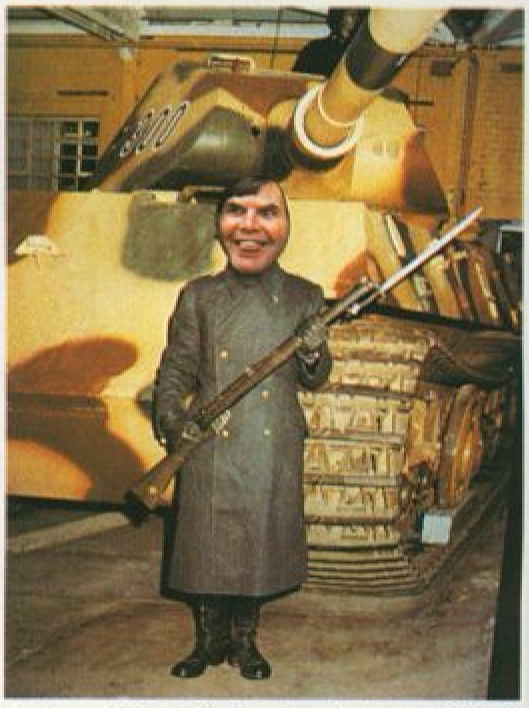


This is where the gunner would be sitting in real life. It's rather less comfortable than your armchair...

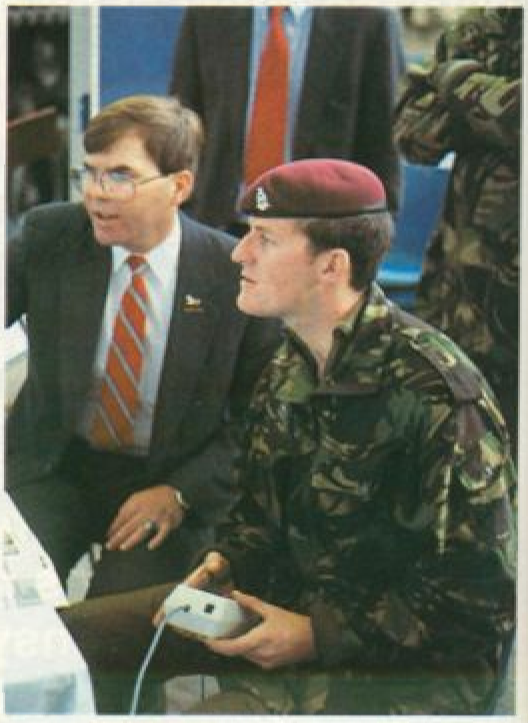
The skills of your crew are of paramount importance and your long-term objective is to develop their skills in action, winning the medals and improving their performance. Your ultimate goal is, naturally, to become embroiled in a full-scale war against the Soviets and send their T80m84's and other metal monsters to the scrapheap. Microprose obviously aren't in a hurry to declare an end to East-West conflict, which seems a pity until you realise that if the game is to be realistic it has to reflect the fact that the Soviets are currently the only people with some hardware to challenge you with.

Winning the war, however, is quite impossible unless your crews are up to scratch. That's because M1TP is a clever blend of player intervention and computer control. Battles are fought over a 3D map with hills, valleys, rivers, and many other topographical features. At any time during battle you can select any one of your vehicles, wherever and whatever it may be, from a scout helicopter (yes, even total flight freaks get their fix here) checking out the opposition to an M1 Abrahams sneaking up the river, and get the relevant 3D view up on your screen.

With tanks, this selection gives you complete control over that vehicle and all the crew members. The good news, however, is that this complete control is supplemented by the computer so that you can, for example, take the commander's position, sticking your head out of the hatch and peering around with your binoculars, while at the same time telling your driver to go full speed ahead, your gunner to fire at will, and the other vehicles in your formation to take up Echelon left formation (ranged behind you, guns at 45 degrees). Suddenly, there you are careering across the landscape, guns all blazing together, smashing your way through the opposition...Flight sim freaks can eat hot lead for all I care, this beats single-handed aerial combat any day.



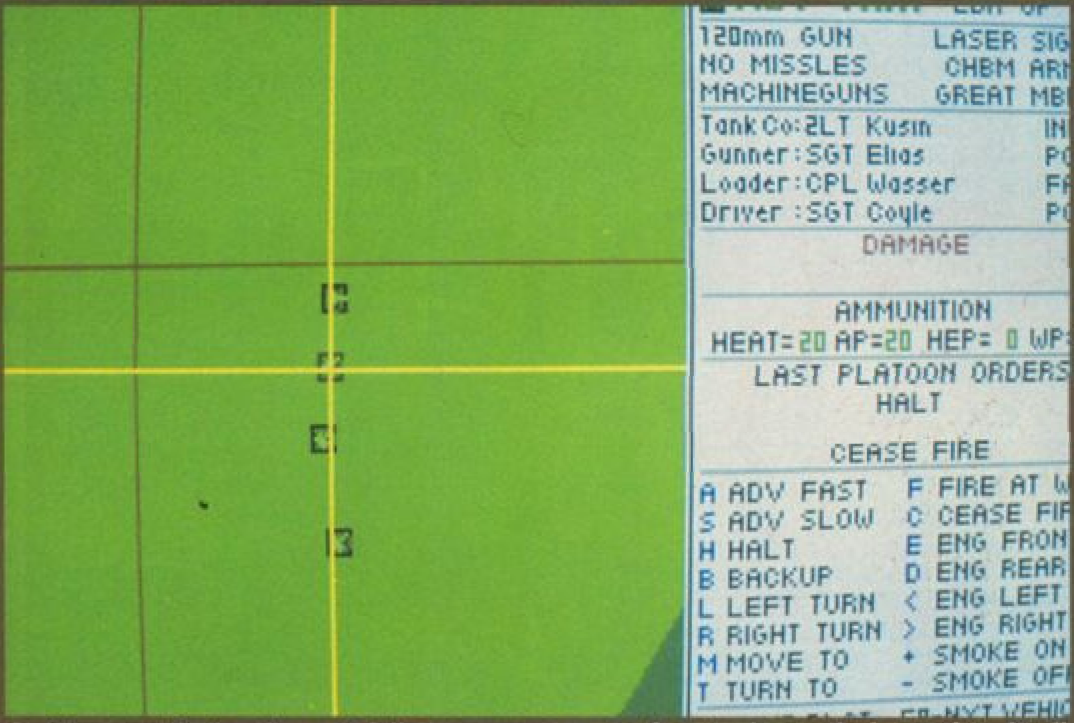
OK, so Wild Bill Stealey looks as if he's finally flipped his lid. However, he did have the good sense to use the Freedom of Information Act to get the data he needed for the game.



Major Wild Bill takes a *real* tankbuster through the game.

ATTACK!

How does it feel to roar into battle at the head of your armoured platoon? Here's a quick engagement with the Soviets to whet your appetite...

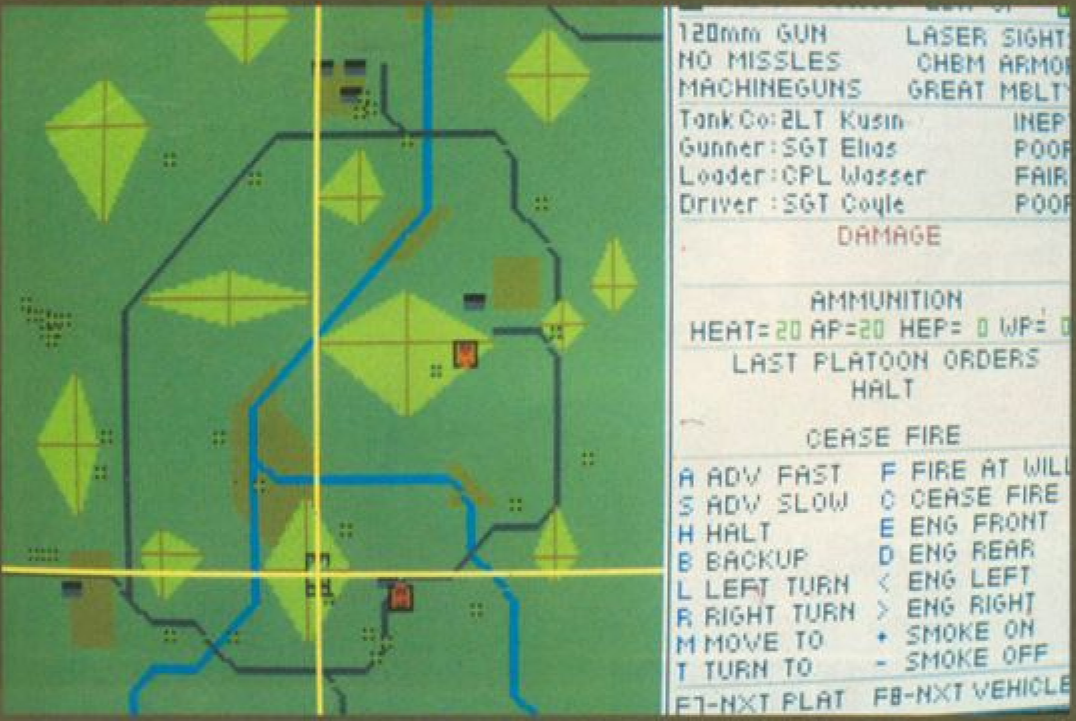


```
120mm GUN        LASER SIG
NO MISSLES        CHBM ARM
MACHINEGUNS      GREAT MB
Tank Co:2LT Kusin         IN
Gunner:SGT Elias          PO
Loader:CPL Wasser         FA
Driver :SGT Coyle         PO
          DAMAGE

        AMMUNITION
 HEAT=20 AP=20 HEP= 0 WP=
    LAST PLATOON ORDERS
           HALT

        CEASE FIRE
A ADV FAST     F FIRE AT W
S ADV SLOW     C CEASE FIR
H HALT         E ENG FRON
B BACKUP       D ENG REAR
L LEFT TURN    < ENG LEFT
R RIGHT TURN   > ENG RIGHT
M MOVE TO      + SMOKE ON
T TURN TO      - SMOKE OFF
```

On the map display, here at full zoom, we see our four tanks ready for action. It all looks green because they're on a hill...Some of the crews are over the hill, but that's another matter...



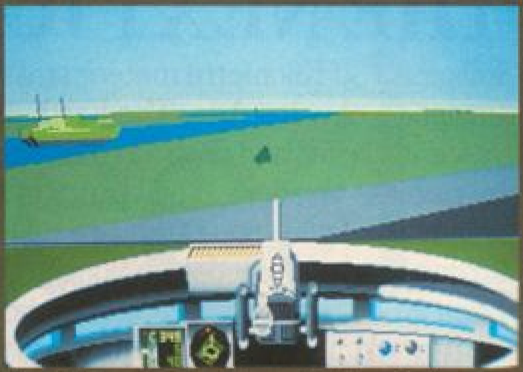
```
120mm GUN        LASER SIGHT
NO MISSLES        CHBM ARMO
MACHINEGUNS      GREAT MBLT
Tank Co:2LT Kusin         INEP
Gunner:SGT Elias          POOR
Loader:CPL Wasser         FAIR
Driver :SGT Coyle         POOR
          DAMAGE

        AMMUNITION
 HEAT=20 AP=20 HEP= 0 WP= 0
    LAST PLATOON ORDERS
           HALT

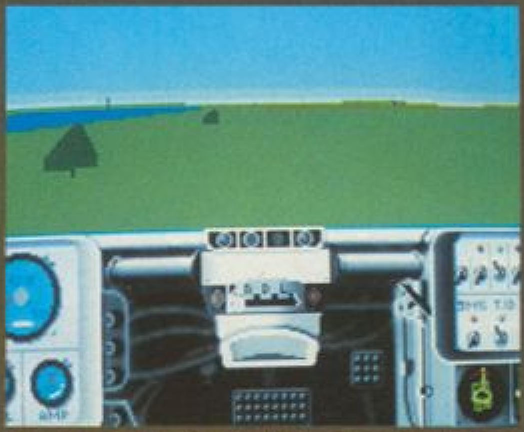
        CEASE FIRE
A ADV FAST     F FIRE AT WILL
S ADV SLOW     C CEASE FIRE
H HALT         E ENG FRONT
B BACKUP       D ENG REAR
L LEFT TURN    < ENG LEFT
R RIGHT TURN   > ENG RIGHT
M MOVE TO      + SMOKE ON
T TURN TO      - SMOKE OFF
F7-NXT PLAT   F8-NXT VEHICLE
```

Zoom out to see the entire map. The panel on the right shows the current vehicle's statistics. Note that the commander is, er, 'Inept'. The red spots are hostile vehicles. Let's go get 'em!

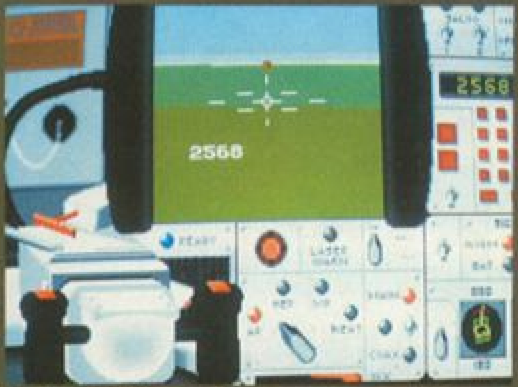
The map screen is where you do your thinking, and where you find out what's going on across the entire battle arena. Your units and the enemy's are all clearly marked and you can select any unit (hostile or friendly) by pinpointing it with the crosshairs and pressing RETURN. This not only gives you control over it, but also all pertinent information in a window to the right.



The driver peers through his windscreen and puts his foot down. The instruments aren't just for show – each one tells you something that could save your life!



A quick eyeball out of the hatch catches one of our other platoon members on the left. We're going to follow the stream to the west and then cut off north to engage the enemy (check the map).



As we approach, the gunner gets jumpy. Needle indicator at bottom centre selects appropriate ammo – we're currently using Sabot armour piercing (range around 1500 metres). The target's visible dead ahead just above the sights – all we've got to do now is close in and let rip!

THE ACE VERDICT

We rate M1TP at 926. That ought to speak for itself. It's a welcome break from flight sims that boasts enough detail to keep even the most complusive nitpicker happy, and at the same time has a breadth of challenge and combat scenarios that should satisfy the most ardent gamester. A winner.

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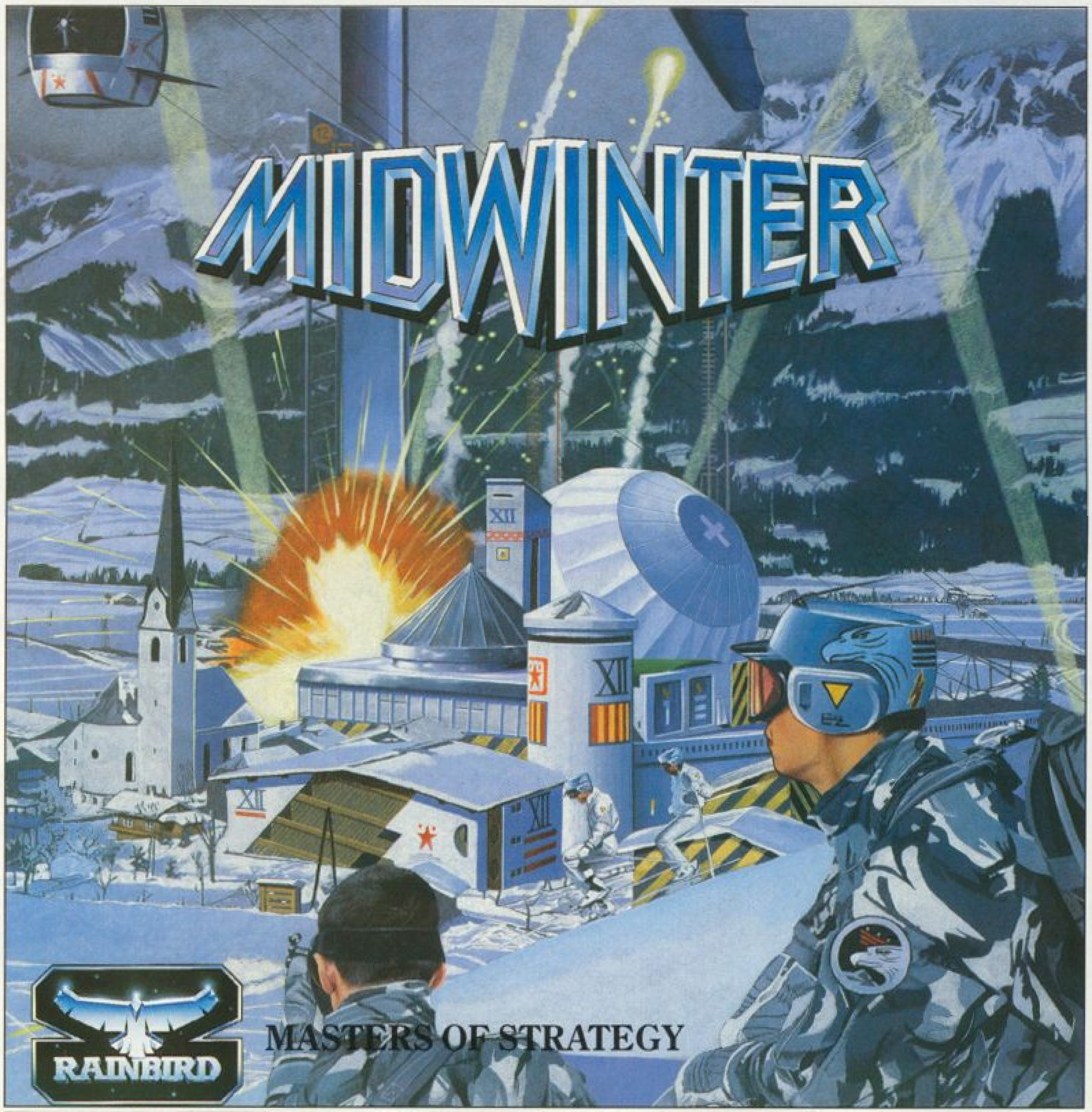

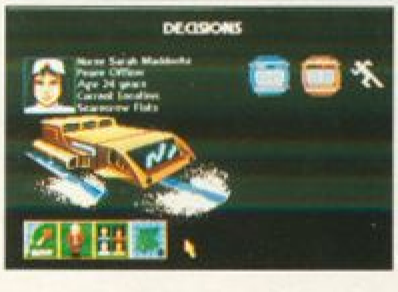

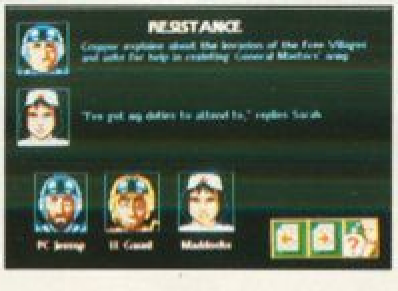

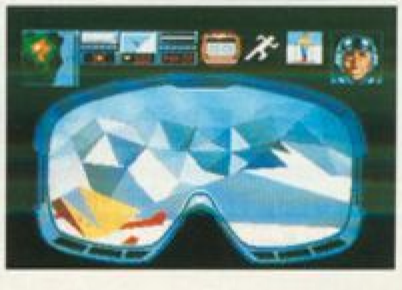

MicroProse, Unit 1, Hampton Road Industrial Estate, Tetbury, Glos, GL8 8DA.

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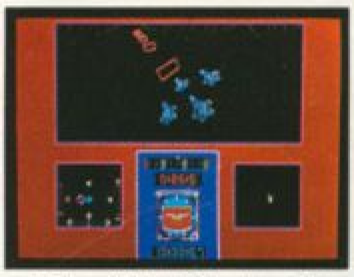
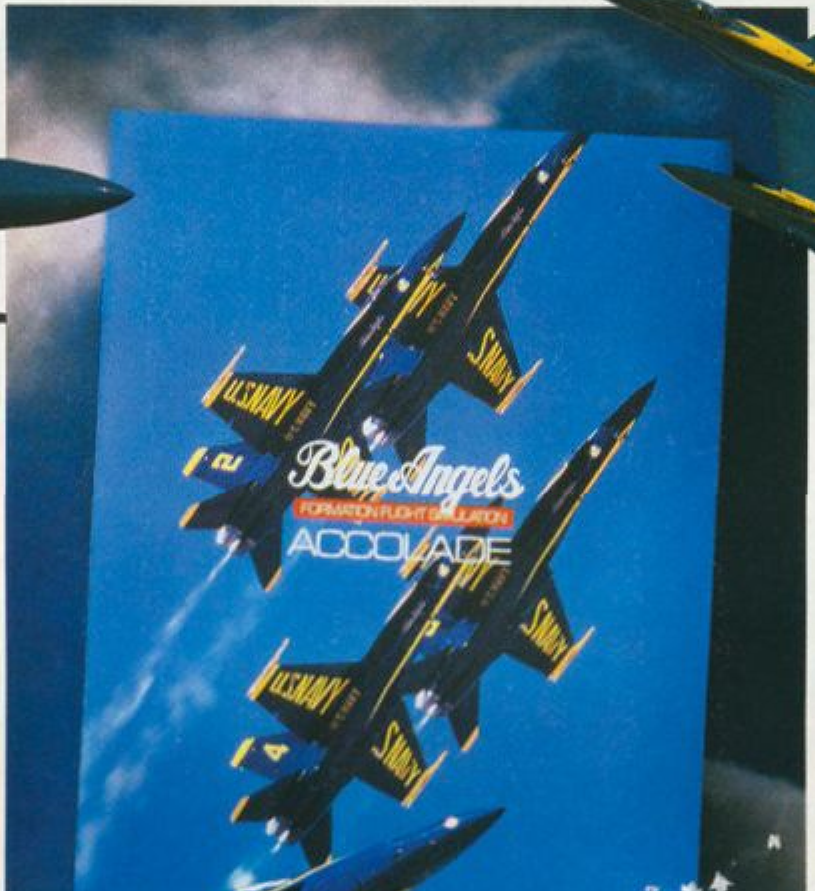
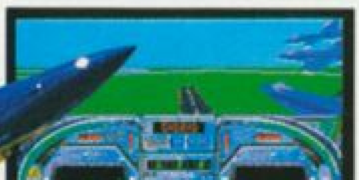


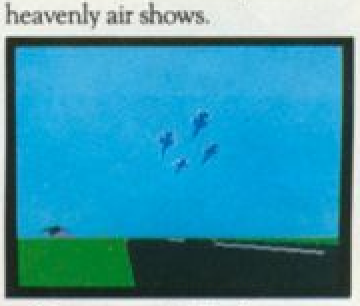
Train with the Blue Angels in a wire-frame flight simulator. Plot the path you've flown in 3-D against the ideal path of the maneuver.





Then dance with danger in one of four Blue Angel F/A-18s – a jet that can twist 500 knots into a 5g vertical climb.

Pierce the clouds on a wing and a prayer. Engage your formation in delta rolls, left echelon rolls and fan breaks. Wow the crowd during three heavenly air shows.



You can watch all of your maneuvers from a variety of camera angles, review the performance on Instant Replay – even take a bird's-eye tour of the entire airfield in "Free Flight" mode.

If you're a blue chip Blue Angel, they'll induct you into the "Pilots Hall Of Fame." Because only the best and the brightest can take 32,000 pounds of military thrust and turn it on a dime.

Blue Angels Formation Flight Simulation. Everything you've ever experienced in flight simulation is about to take a 360-degree diamond roll.

Actual game screens from IBM PC EGA version of the game. Other versions may vary

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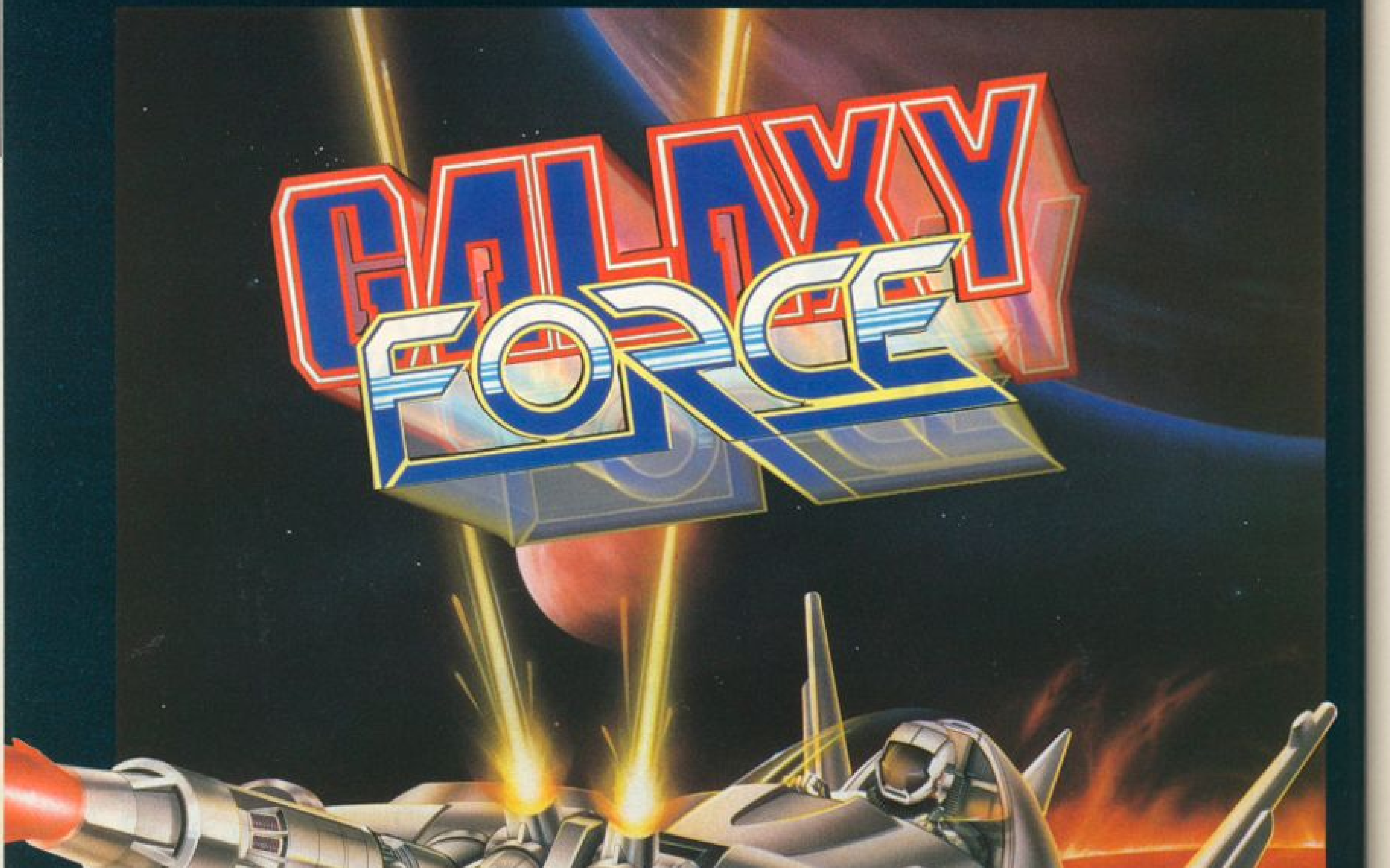
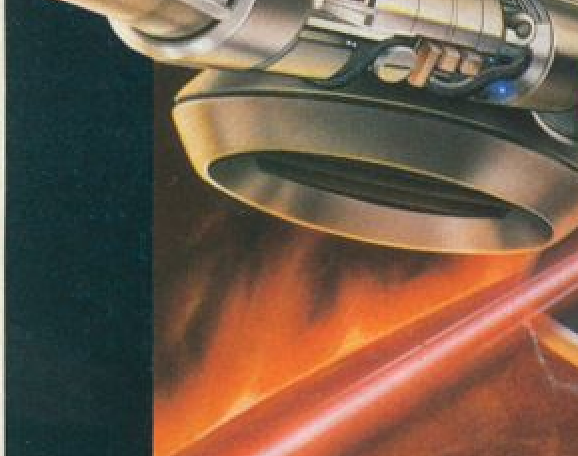


ACTIVISION


ATARI ST SCREEN

SPECTRUM SCREEN

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Penetrate the enemy fortress and blast your way through underground
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And, if you get out alive – you'll see it's only the beginning of the greatest
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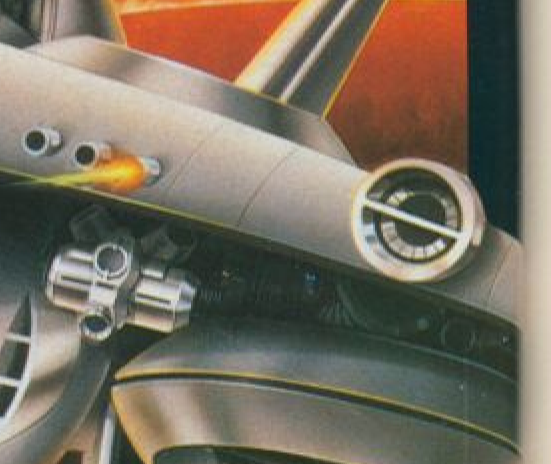
ATARI ST SCREENS

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SEGA

XMAS '89 RUNNERS & DRIVERS

Your complete guide to the main game launches of Christmas season.

As the main challengers for the lucrative number one slot in the Christmas charts line up on the starting grid- the likely winner is as difficult to predict as ever. One thing is clear though. Christmas '89's biggie is going to be a racing game.

In pole position are last year's winners Ocean with their home conversions of the Taito racer - *Chase HQ*. Sega's *Power Drift* will be challenging strongly with heavy weight PR and TV commercials through Activision.

In third position on the grid is *Hard Drivin* - the coin-op game licence from Domark. These are not the only games in the race. There are one or two brilliant original titles to be reckoned with as well - *Stunt Car* for example, or *Vette* are yet to appear on a few key formats - and *Continental Circus* and *Turbo Out Run* are no slouchers either. There are other hot licences- *Ninja Warriors* looks superb, as does *The Untouchables* - but *ACE* is sure the Xmas biggie will have wheels on.

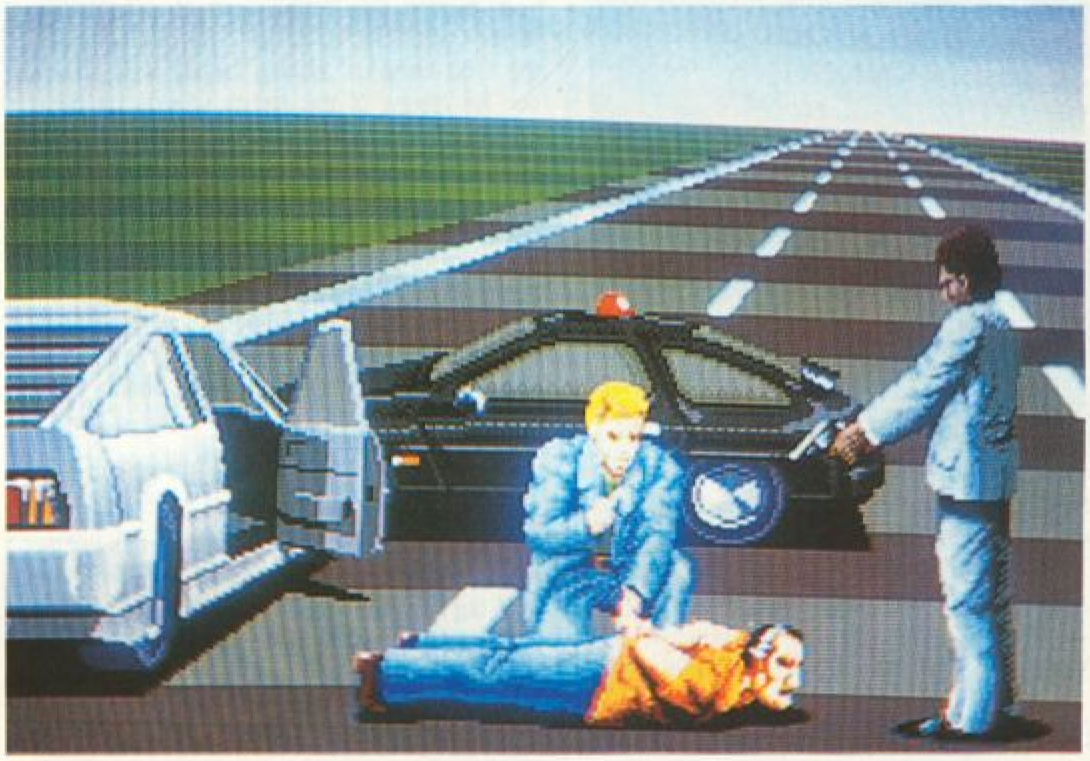
We have divided the field into Favourites, Front Runners, Outsiders, and Christmas Turkeys. Don't buy anything until you have checked our guide - and why not let your best friend, lover, parents, or Great Aunty Nelly take a butchers at it as well before they do their Christmas shopping.

THE FAVOURITES

Chase HQ

Ocean

Taito's *Chase HQ* placed the player at the wheel of a plain clothes police Porsche. It was straight out of *Miami Vice* - chasing the villains through the streets and along the highway, taking pot shots at them as you stood up in the car, and aimed your gun from the sun roof. Your HQ gives you your mission which is generally the macho business of rescuing some buxom bimbo who has been abducted by the bad guys. A constant running commentary is kept up by HQ as you twist and turn and attempt to get the crooks in your gun sights. The cops and robbers scenario provided an added interest to the main business of racing along at breakneck speed in a Porsche.



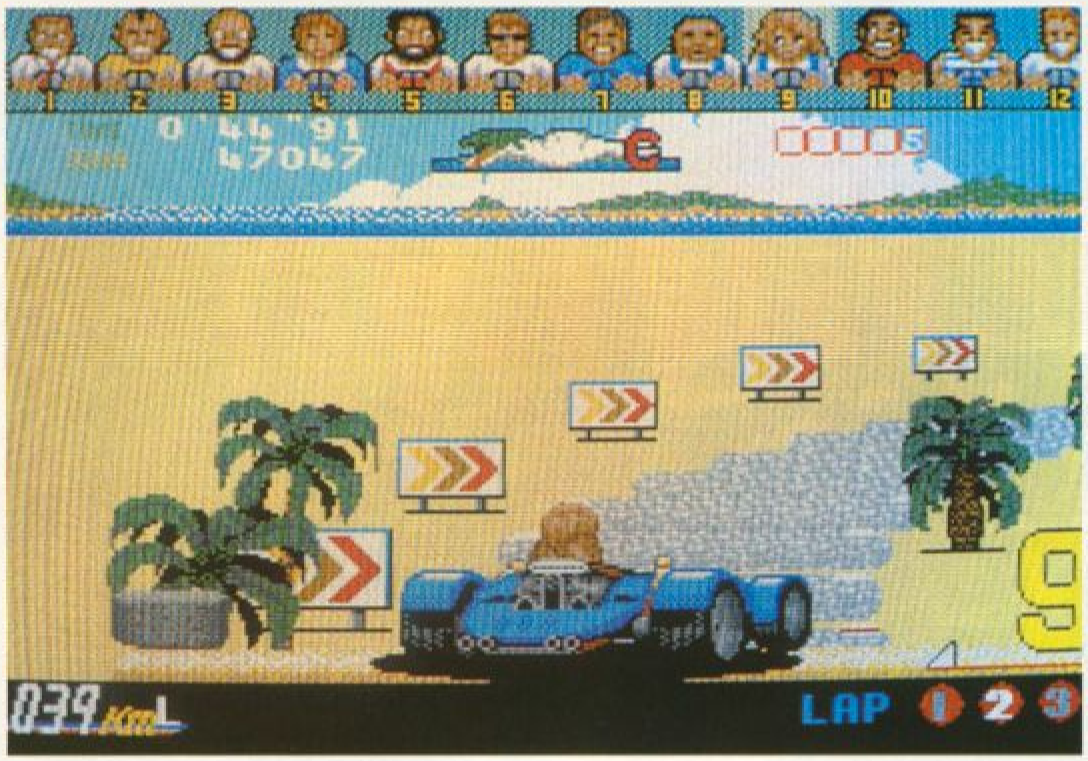
HIGH SCORE
SCORE
DISTANCE
SPEED
STAGE

There is nothing in *Chase HQ* to make you gasp and think "they are never going to do that on a home computer". Converting it to most systems should provide no problem to Ocean's large in-house programming team - even if they are not particularly well known for driving games. Of the work we have seen so far on the conversions they are looking extremely good - with the Spectrum performing particularly well in the graphics and speed departments. Our money is on *Chase HQ* - to take the number one slot with, as happened last year, Ocean competing largely against themselves, with at least another two of their titles likely to be in the top ten.

Power Drift

Activision

Once again Activision make their bid for the top slot by attempting to convert a 'state of the art' Sega game. *Power Drift* was a monster, literally, when it appeared in the arcades last Summer. One of the biggest cabinets I have ever seen. But its physical size was not matched by its performance as a money spinner. It proved a bit difficult to get into, and at a quid a go you couldn't afford that much practice.



DRIVER
A
B
C
D

This was a shame as the game is superb - with real depth as opposed to the simple sight seeing of something like *Out Run*.

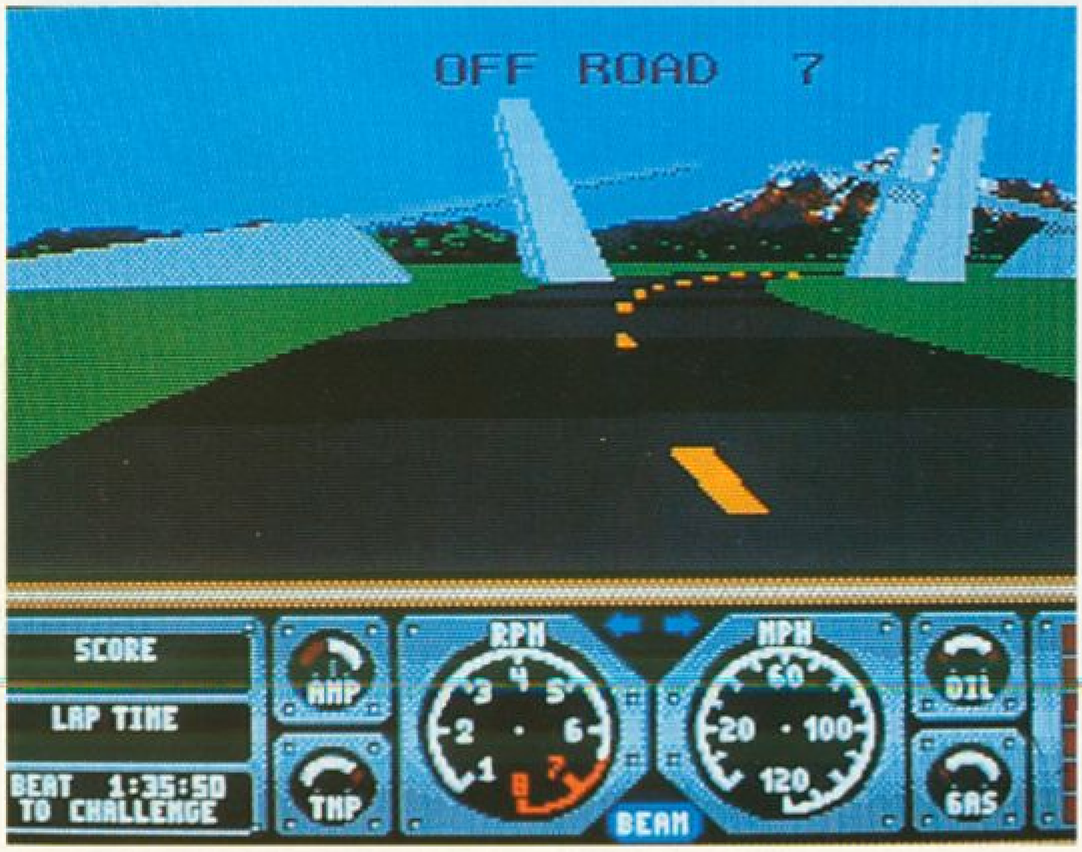
The game places you at the wheel of a souped up hot rod with massive tires, a very low perspective on the road, and pits you against eleven other reckless speed freaks. There are five courses - with five separate circuits in each. The best spills and frills are to be had on the corners and with the ramps as the buggy takes off and skids on landing. Nice inclines and steep up-hill climbs add to the feeling of power that rests under the bonnet of your buggy. Conversion work is progressing nicely - with, just as in the case of *Chase HQ*, the 8-bit versions looking largely well. Check our full review of the Amiga version on page 80. All versions will be reviewed in Updates as soon as we lay our hands on them.

Although the *ACE* money is on *Chase HQ* - there are one or two voices around here muttering that Activision may well out-hype the Manchester software house, and that the quality of conversions may have nothing at all to do with what sells in Christmas week. Shame that.

Hard Drivin

Domark

The Dom Doms bid for the Christmas biggie rests on their conversions of Atari's *Hard Drivin*. A big hit in the arcades - with stacks of them still around - which is more than can be said for *Power Drift*.



SCORE
LAP TIME
BEAT 1:35:50 TO CHALLENGE
AMP
TMP
RPM
MPH
OIL
GAS

Hard Drivin took a revolutionary approach to coin-op racing when it appeared in the Arcades this Spring. It is much more of a simulation than any of the others - with the car performing in a realistic manner, i.e. the steering wheel wrestles against you if you attempt to take a corner too quickly. There is lots of fun to be had though and there is also a race on with stacks of other cars to be lapped or to collide with for the hapless driver.

The neatest feature of all is the 'loop the loop' track. You really need to put your foot down to have sufficient momentum to push your vehicle through 360 degrees. The graphics in *Hard Drivin* look more like a home computer game in the *Starglider II*, *Carrier Command*, style than they do a coin-op. This bodes well for the conversions - particularly the 16-bit conversions. As with all games of a semi-3D nature the Spectrum versions perform well- and *Hard Drivin* is no exception judging from the work in progress we have seen so far. The *Hard Drivin* course with its Speed Track, bridges, ramps, and loop the loop track provide stacks of playability. A lot more challenging than *Chase HQ* and, to a lesser extent, *Power Drift* as well.

THE FRONT RUNNERS

Operation Thunderbolt

Ocean

The sequel to *Operation Wolf* - and really just more of the same. Spray Uzi fire at anything that moves as you attempt to rescue the hostages and escape in the plane.Taito added an extra Uzi to the cabinet for simultaneous two player action and there are also one or two pieces of 3D'ish graphics as you travel into the screen in armoured vehicles. More levels than the first one - as you travel from road, to mansion, through an army camp, an airfield and finally to a hijacked airliner where the hostages are held. Your aim is to shoot the terrorists without injuring any of the passengers or the pilot. As the sequel to the massively successful *Operation Wolf* - *Operation Thunderbolt* has a large army of fans out there who may fancy another go at the shooting gallery.

Conversions look every bit as good as they were of *Op-Wolf*- and the sequel will benefit from the fact the programmers can polish up and improve on the routines they developed for the first game. Competent conversions on all machines make *Op-Thunderbolt* a strong front runner.

Galaxy Force

Activision

Another massive Sega cabinet from their 'think big' era. The eight legged monster looked more like a lunar landing module than a coin-op. Complete with booming speakers and hydraulic seat *GF* machines didn't come cheap when they were launched last Summer. For this reason you could only find them in the bigger - Seaside-style arcades.

Activision raised a few eye-brows amongst arcade fans when they announced that they had licensed the game for home conversion. The basic idea is to blast the hell out of the aliens as you hurtle through a choice of five space scapes. The graphics of the coin-op were superb. Faster than *Afterburner* and with stacks more detail in the backgrounds. You could fly under objects, as well as over them, all the time blasting away with a choice of weaponry. Each of the levels is divided into two sections - an open sky shoot out and then into the cavernous interior of the enemy base. You ship is replenished by shield strength - which needs to be topped up by grabbing power-ups as you travel.

Activision have their work cut out attempting to convert this. As for its chart performance - its a big name licence, it will be heavily promoted by Activision, and it will sell regardless of what *ACE* or anyone else thinks of it.

Cabal

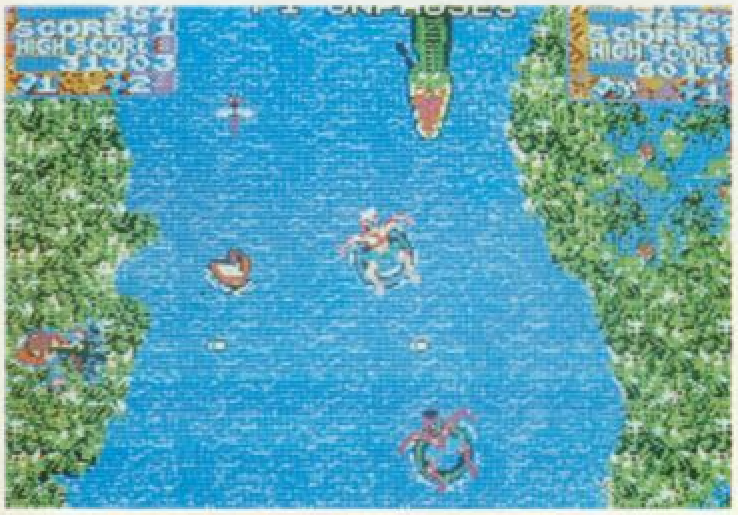
Ocean

Cabal is 3D military shoot 'em up in the *Op-Wolf* style - but you control a commando rather than moving a cross hair around the screen. The end of each level is protected by a giant gun ship, tank, and submarine. The game did well for Capcom in the arcades and ought to equally well for Ocean as a conversion. All versions should be coded to a high standard as the original game design is fairly straight forward - and Ocean ought to be able to use existing routines.

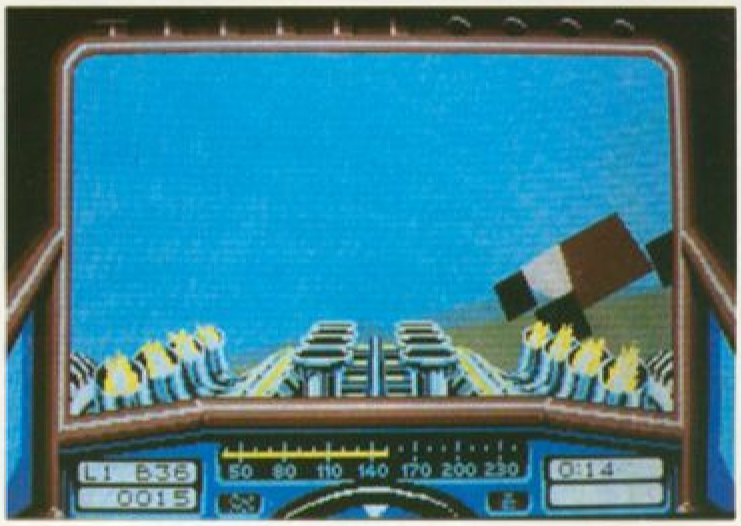
Toobin

Domark

This one could surprise a few people. It was never a massive arcade hit but it had a loyal following who absolutely loved it to bits. Like *Bubble Bobble*, it is ever so cute and hugely addictive.



Another wacky Atari coin-op title in which the player has to shoot the rapids - amongst other courses - in a tire inner tube,or 'Toob' as they call them in the States - hence "Toobin". One to watch.



Ninja Warriors

Virgin

From a famously bad conversion of a beat 'em up last Christmas in the shape of *Double Dragon* - Virgin have bounced back with what is arguably the best conversion of any beat 'em up ever, yes ever, in the shape of *Ninja Warriors.* They have pulled off the near impossible by devising a system that successfully simulates the treble screen, Taito coin-op on one narrow strip of game play action on 16bit machines. Looks superb, and plays well - as you take on a variety of military, hoodlum, and animal adversaries in this horizontally scrolling conversion of this Summer '88 arcade hit. A very strong front runner indeed.

Bat Man - The Movie

Ocean

Can Bat-hype carry through until Christmas? There is no reason to think not, particularly with the granny and girl friend purchasers making up a significant number of Xmas 'gift' game buyers. The conversion sensibly concentrates on a few of the exciting scenes from the film - like the race through Gotham City in the Batmobile, the big scrap in the Joker's hide out, and the bursting of the toxic balloons that floated above the city that Batman pierced by flying through them in the Bat-jet. This makes for an amusing multi-event arcade challenge. Could even be a number one. Holy megabucks!

Stunt Car Racer

Microprose

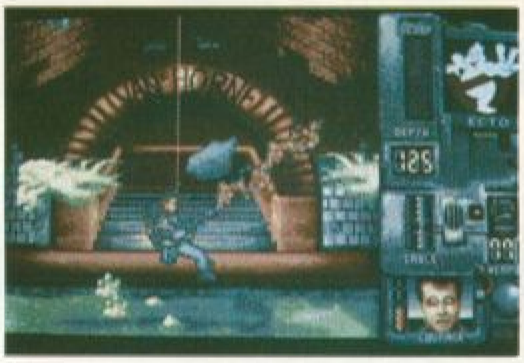
Geof Crammond's master piece has so far only been reviewed on the ST - where it won accolades from every single reviewer who looked at it. The excellent C64 version is Updated on page 99 and that, too, is superb. With key versions about to hit the shops (Amiga, Spectrum, and PC) that all look equally good - this innovative game could well push some of the 'big name' licensed racers off the circuit. Its combination of filled polygon graphics and race challenges like bridges and ramps make for comparisons with *Hard Drivin* - but in *ACE*'s view it is more entertaining than this. It is more of a challenge - and thats what racing games have been crying out for. You want to do much more than just drive fast.

The best original challenge to the mega-licence, mega-hype incarnations. In the hearts of real racing fans, this deserves the top slot - even if they know in their heads that it isn't going to get it. Still *ACE*'s first choice racing game - whatever happens in the Christmas Computer Game Grand Prix.

Ghost Busters II

Activision

The film hasn't exactly bombed, and it hasn't exactly done that well either. It has just been overshadowed by things like *Lethal Weapon II,* the indomitable *Batman,* and the soon to be launched - *Star Trek V* - which also has a computer game conversion, and a red hot one t'boot. The game is apparently brilliant - though not reviewable as we go to press, and is high on Activision's list of titles to receive heavy weight hype, which should insure a chart position. Gary Williams is Marshmallow Man.



The Untouchables

Ocean

Sean Connery made the film. He played a certain type of American cop - tough, uncompromising, and best described by Tom Wolfe in Bonfire of the Vanities as "Irish Cop - don't back off". This shoot 'em up don't back off either. Based on a few action packed scenes from the film (Ocean are becoming quite expert at this) the player has to complete six levels. Its combination of horizontal scrolling action and impressive graphical representation of 1920's Chicago make for an excellent - *Op- Wolfish* sort of a game. Could well repeat the massive - though unexpected success of *Robocop.*

Turbo Outrun

U S Gold

Out Run is such a successful coin-op that you still find plenty of them around in most arcades

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- two and a half years after its launch. The Turbo version simply added prettier, and smoother graphics - with a turbo button which gives a short boost of super speed when pressed. USG's chief development house - Probe of South London - are crowing about the quality of the conversion. A big name game that will undoubtedly shift off the shelves this Christmas.

Ghouls and Ghosts

U S Gold

This Capcom coin-op is ideally suited for conversion to home machines. Indeed many reviewers observed when *Ghouls and Ghosts* and its predecessor - *Ghosts and Goblins*, were launched - that they should have been home games.The Sega Megadrive version of *Ghouls and Ghosts* has already won praise in many reviews - and there is no reason why these USG conversions shouldn't be every bit as good on the Amiga and ST.

You are a knight in shining armour on a mission to rescue a princess - collecting power ups and taking out the ghouls, ghosts, and other assorted nasties who are out to stop you. USG are not amongst the favourites this year - for the first time in four years - but they do have a very strong front runner in *Ghouls and Ghosts*.

THE OUTSIDERS

Shadow of the Beast

Psygnosis

Very pretty scrolling shoot em 'em up adventure. So far only available on the Amiga. Unlikely to take a top placing on only one format.

Kick Off

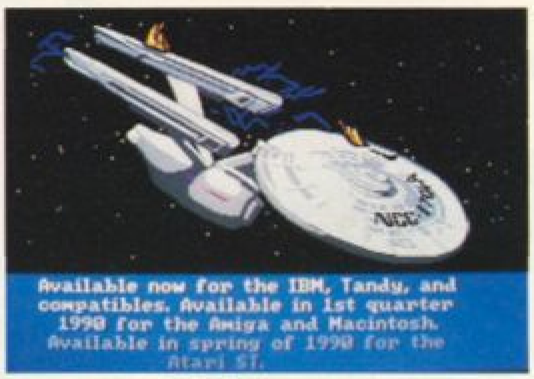
Anco

Footy is always popular - and Anco have the best version for 16-bit machines currently available. Likely to find its way in to quite a few Christmas stockings.

Continental Circus

Virgin

An excellent Taito grand prix coin-op in its day and well converted on most systems by Virgin. Likely to be overshadowed by more up to date racing conversions.



Available now for the IBM, Tandy, and compatibles. Available in 1st quarter 1990 for the Amiga and Macintosh. Available in spring of 1990 for the Atari ST.

Star Trek V

Mindscape

The world is full of Trekkies - and with film number V about to be released - this film tie-in should have very strong Christmas present appeal.

Strider

US Gold

Excellent conversion of the recent Capcom arcade adventure. Has been well rated by *ACE* and other mags. May have peaked by Christmas.

Myth

System 3

Excellent arcade adventure from the *Last Ninja* software house. Could get System 3 back into gamers good books - after the fiasco that was *Dominator*?

Damocles

Novagen

The sequel to *Mercenary* - and looking absolutely superb. Only available on 16-bit and (PC after Christmas) *Damocles* ups the stakes in the increasingly popular solid 3D filled vector graphics - *Starglider II* type game. Rave reviews are about to break in most magazines and hard core game fans will love it.

Vette

Spectrum Holobyte

Its chart performance will be restricted by only being available on the PC so far - which is probably fortunate for the licencees of some of the coin-op racers. Watch it race up the charts as soon as it is available on Amiga/ST. An excellent simulation of a race through California in America's answer to the Ferrari - a red Corvette.

Interphase

Image Works

Another filled 3D vector graphics incarnation that looks stunning on 16-bits. Deservedly *ACE* rated in this issue - but perhaps not commercial enough to go top ten at Christmas.

Fighter Bomber

Activision

ACE rated flight game that should convert well to all machines. F14's, F16's, Mig's, and stacks of other planes to chose from. A strong seller up to and after Christmas.

Rick Dangerous

Firebird

Without doubt the best platform game launched this year and now available on all formats. Should maintain a strong chart position from now till Christmas.

Ultimate Golf

Gremlin

Gremlin have put a lot into this one and it shows. Should benefit from a rare shortage of new golf games. Could go all the way to the top ten.

Altered Beast

Activision

Popular Sega beat 'em up with huge sprites and excellent sound. Likely to be a bit of fashion victim in that beat 'em ups are not as popular as they used to be. It might chart - but it is unlikely to go top ten.

M1 Tank

Microprose

TIME
RANK
59.9
99
km/h

Superb tank warfare simulation. So far only available on PC and therefore unlikely to chart this Christmas.

Iron Lord

Ubisoft

Role playing strategy game in the Cinemaware style. Very pretty, but not main stream enough to go top ten at Christmas.

Moonwalker

US Gold

Whose bad? Not MJ's computer game say US Gold - but then they would, wouldn't they. Strong Christmas pressie appeal should ensure a chart position for this licence game.

Storm Lord

Hewson

Extremely pretty arcade adventure featuring fairies and dragons. Will turn heads in the shop with its graphics.

CHRISTMAS TURKEYS

Beach Volley

Ocean

Bronzed hunks play volley ball on the beach while their bimbettes look on. Yuk. In the middle of winter as well. Double yuk.

Gazza's Super Soccer

Empire

Spurs Geordie joker provides the 'name' endorsement for this latest computer soccer offering. Why don't companies concentrate on making good footy games instead of on getting soccer stars mug shots for the packaging.?

Cribbage King

Mindscape

According to the advertisement this game features the "World's strongest Cribbage-playing algorithms". My word, how interesting. Zzzzzzzzzz.

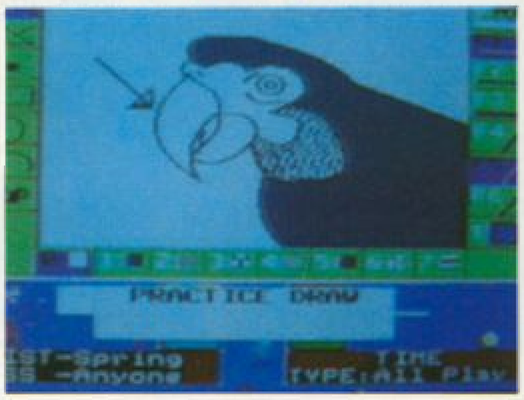
Roadwars

16-Blitz

How can anyone in their right mind re-release this mega-Turkey - even if it is only £4.99, and even if it is the season of good will. You will be well and truly stuffed if you get this in your Christmas stocking.

Pictionary

Domark



The 16-bit versions cost more than the board game itself, which is clearly ridiculous when you consider that they don't have even half of its playbility. What a turkey.

Lotus 1 2 3

Lotus Development Corporation

No pretty graphics, no arcade entertainment value whatsoever, it costs several hundred pounds and doesn't run on the C64, Spectrum, Atari ST, or Amiga. Pass the Cranberry sauce.

CHRISTMAS PAST AND CHRISTMAS PRESENT

In the next few weeks the *C+VG* Hits, *ACE* Ratings and stacks of other magazine awards are going to be flying like nobody's business. Everything can't be brilliant, can it? The answer is definitely no - but it is easy to get this impression when you flick through some of the mags in Smiths. To help you make up you own mind we have six Top Tens - the Top Ten from the last four years according to *Gallup*, *ACE*'s prediction for Christmas '89 actual sales - and our merit Top Ten - the ones that would make up the Top Ten if the *ACE* review team got their way.

CHRISTMAS 1985

1	*Commando*	Elite
2	*Yie Ar Kung Fu*	Ocean
3	*They Sold A Million*	Various
4	*Rambo*	Ocean
5	*Elite*	Firebird
6	*Way of the Exploding Fist*	Melbourne House
7	*Computer Hits 10*	Various
8	*Formula One Simulator*	Mastertronic
9	*Winter Games*	Epyx/US Gold
10	*Back To School*	Microshere

CHRISTMAS 1986

1	*Gauntlet*	US Gold
2	*Computer Hits 10*	Various
3	*Trivial Pusuit*	Domark
4	*Space Harrier*	Elite
5	*Paper Boy*	Elite
6	*Hit Pack*	Various
7	*Konami Coin-op Hits*	Ocean
8	*Ollie and Lisa*	Firebird
9	*Five Star Games*	Various
10	*Cobra*	Ocean

CHRISTMAS 1987

1	*Out Run*	US Gold
2	*Match Day Ii*	Ocean
3	*Combat School*	Ocean
4	*Magnificent 7*	Ocean
5	*Live Ammo*	Ocean
6	*Grand Prix Simulator*	Code Masters
7	*Solid Gold*	US Gold
8	*Star Wars*	Domark
9	*10 Pack*	Gremlin Graphics
10	*Game Set And Match*	Ocean

CHRISTMAS 1988

1	*Operation Wolf*	Ocean
2	*Robocop*	Ocean
3	*Double Dragon*	Melbourne House
4	*After Burner*	Activision
5	*Thunder Blade*	U S Gold
6	*Giants*	U S Gold
7	*Falcon*	Mirrorsoft
8	*Joe Blade II*	Players
9	*R-Type*	Electric Dreams
10	*Ghostbusters*	Mastertronic

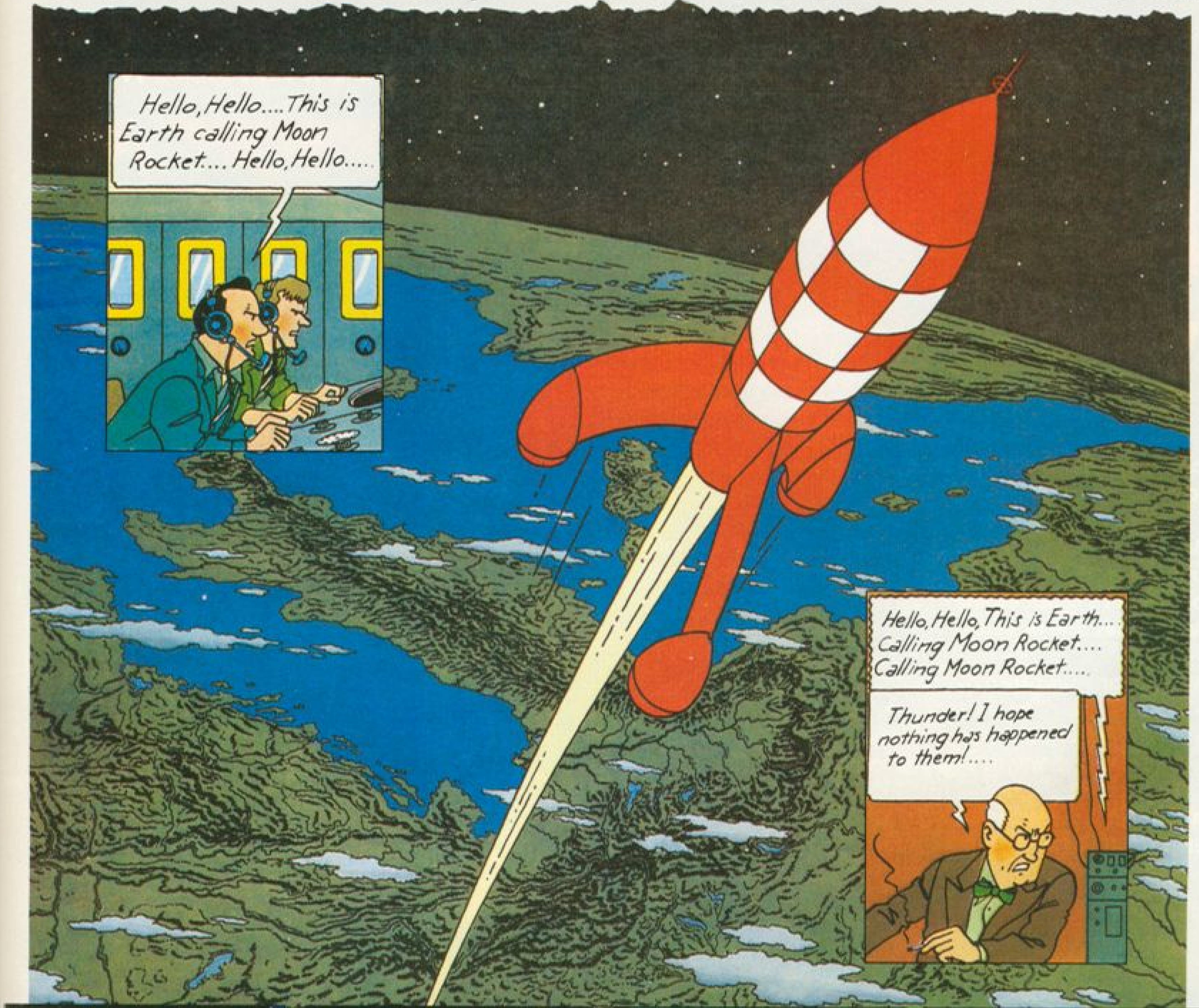
ACE CHRISTMAS PREDICTION 1989

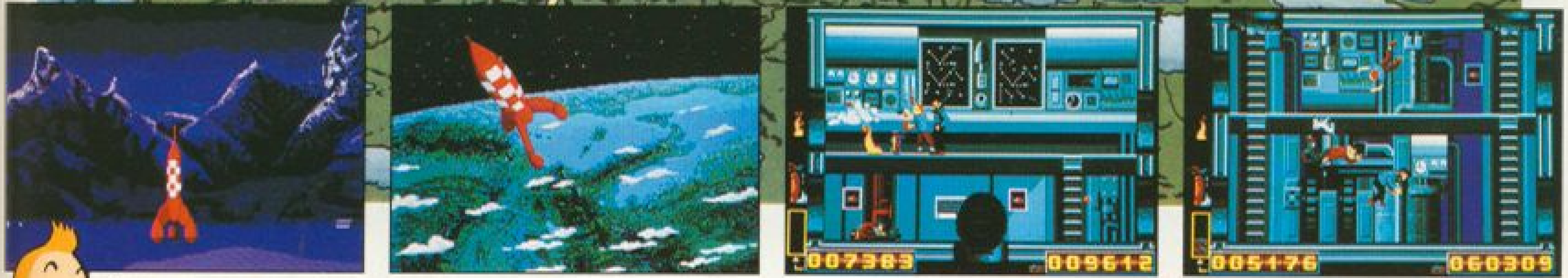
1	*Chase HQ*	Ocean
2	*Power Drift*	Activision
3	*Batman - The Movie*	Ocean
4	*Hard Drivin*	Domark
5	*Operation Thunderbolt*	Ocean
6	*Ghouls and Ghosts*	US Gold
7	*Ninja Warriors*	Virgin
8	*The Untouchables*	Ocean
9	*Winners*	US Gold
10	*Toobin*	Domark

ACE REVIEW TEAM - MERIT TOP TEN

1	*Stunt Car*	Microstyle
2	*Damocles*	Novagen
3	*Interphase*	Image Works
4	*Fighter Bomber*	Activision
5	*M1 Tank*	Microprose
6	*Vette*	Spectrum Holobyte
7	*Hard Drivin*	Domark
8	*Kick Off*	Anco
9	*Rick Dangerous*	Firebird
10	*Batman - The Movie*	Ocean

TINTIN ON THE MOON


Hello, Hello.... This is Earth calling Moon Rocket.... Hello, Hello....
Hello, Hello, This is Earth... Calling Moon Rocket.... Calling Moon Rocket....
Thunder! I hope nothing has happened to them!....


007383
009612
005176
060309

"Hello control station! Here is the moon rocket. Tintin speaking. I have just regained conciousness. Everything seems OK, we are now taking over the controls of the rocket." Aboard the rocket, you will relive with Tintin and his friends the most exciting adventure the world has ever known. The first trip to the Moon!

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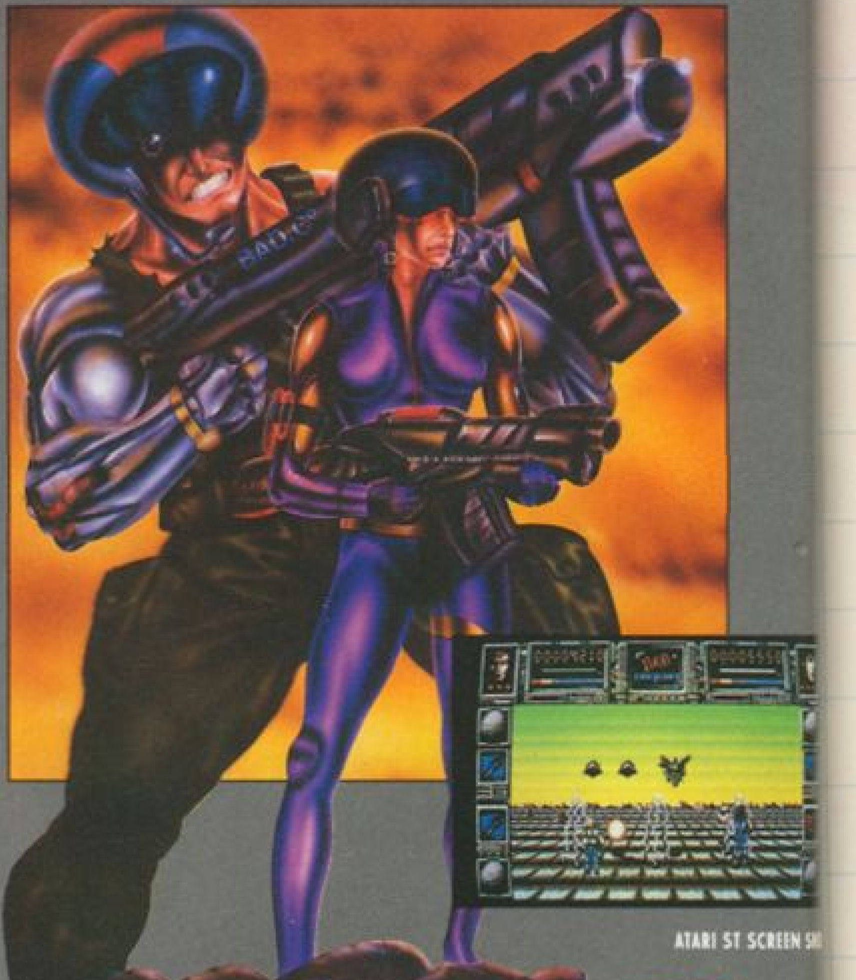
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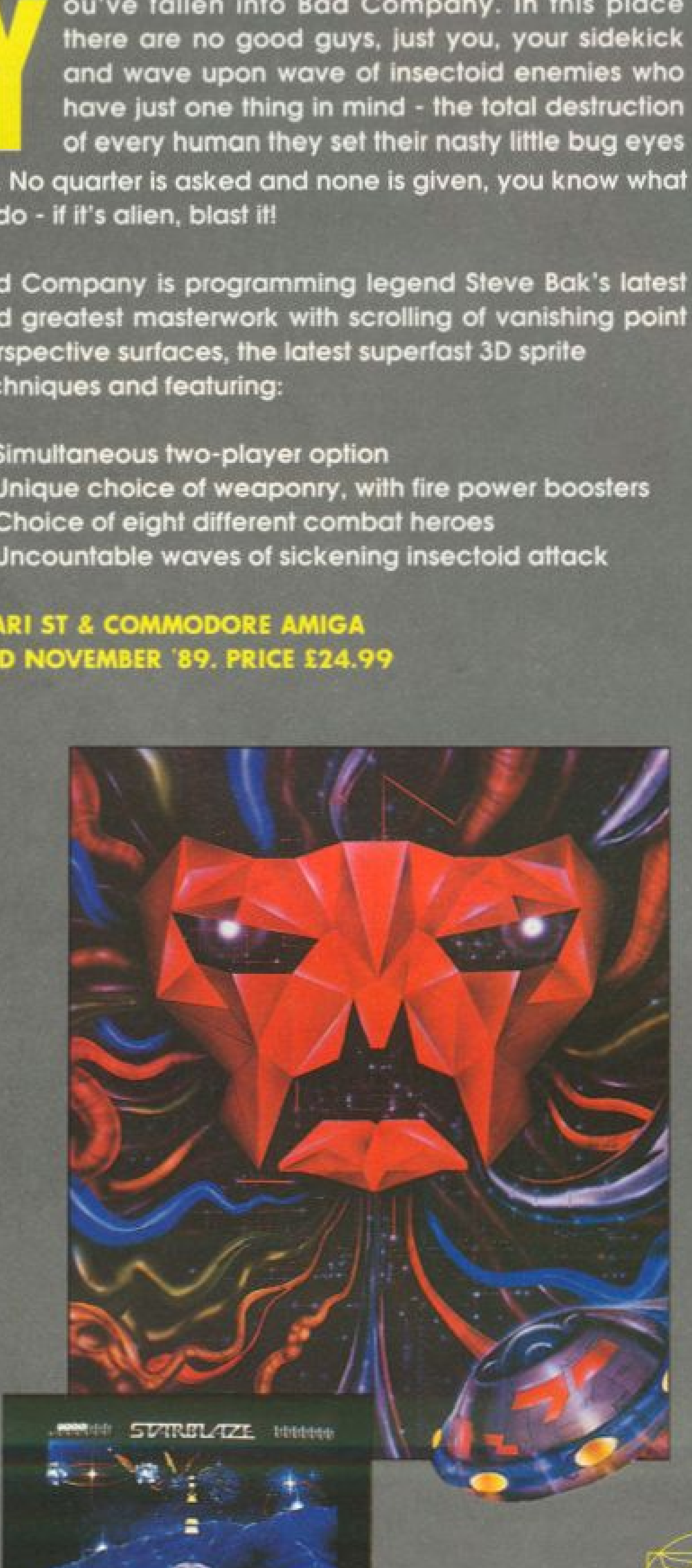
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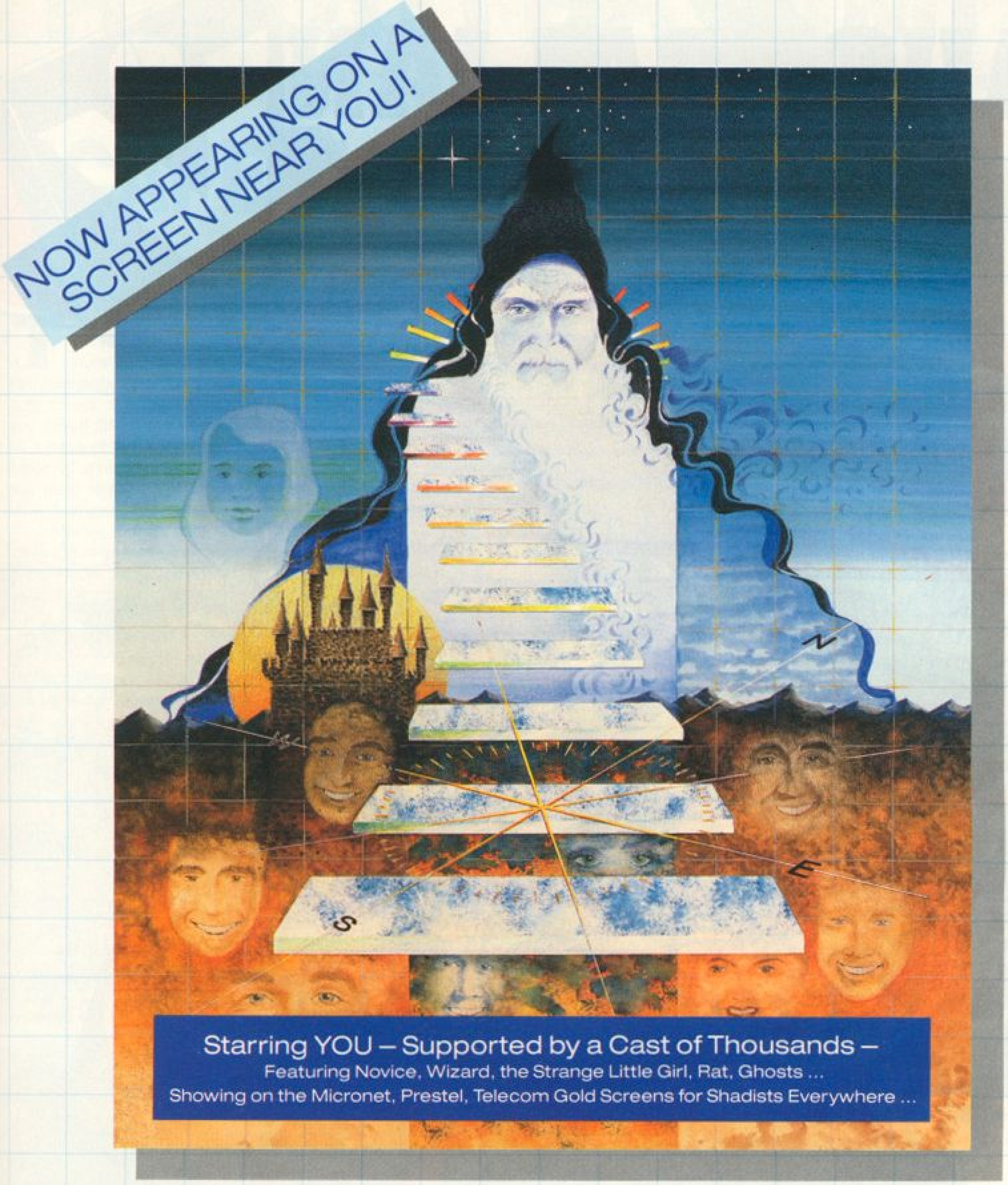
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THE OUTER LIMITS

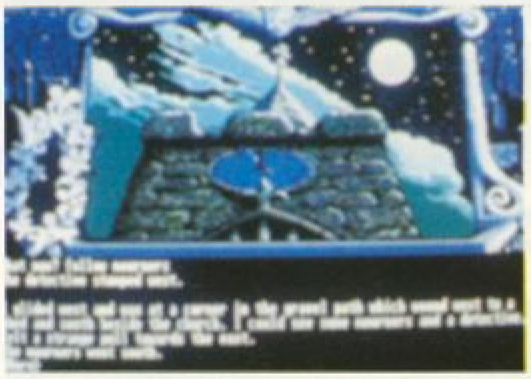
PAT WINSTANLEY PRESENTS HER FIRST FANTASY/ADVENTURE COLUMN

SCAPEGHOST

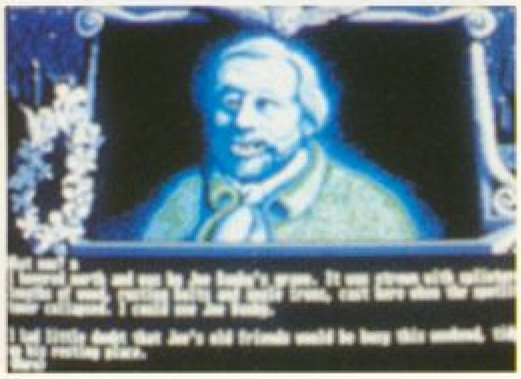
The last LEVEL 9 adventure...Good riddance, or sad farewell?

This is the last text/graphics adventure planned by Level 9 before they set to work with RPGs and their HUGE system (see page 19 of this issue) and as a swan song its not at all bad. How many times have you played the part of a ghost, barely able to lift a piece of thistledown, never mind tackle a hardened criminal? To succeed in *Scapeghost* you must forget about brute force and rely instead on your wits.

Infiltrating a drugs gang has its hazards as you, policeman Alan Chance, have discovered. Someone or something alerted the gang and as a result they rubbed you out, escaping with your colleague Sarah as a hostage. Unfortunately, this heroic self-sacrifice doesn't seem to have gone down well with the Force, on the contrary, they seem to believe that you were in with the gang and have branded you a traitor – this you discover when you materialise, as a ghost, watching your own funeral. You now have only three nights to clear your name and gain revenge.



Marvel at the graphics, despair at the sight of the last Level 9 adventure...



Level 9 put their character handler to work for the last time...with spooks.

After the mourners have left your first task is to build up your strength while persuading your neighbours in this des-res to help you in your task. However the other ghosts are rather a surly lot – well, wouldn't you be if you'd spent the last few years in a damp, dark cemetery? – so you'll need to discover what makes them tick and cheer up their gloomy lives before they'll be of much use. This 'do-goody' scenario seems to be a typical Level 9 hallmark nowadays, after Ingrid's attempts at 'cheering people up' in previous games

Without giving away too much of the plot, the game is split into three sections, one for each night. The first night is spent developing your ghostly powers and working out a way to foil the gang's criminal plans. On the second night you must attempt to alert the police as to the present whereabouts of the criminals, while the third night is spent rescuing Sarah and preventing the gang from destroying the evidence.

Presentation is up to the normal Level 9 standards with atmospherically detailed graphics (which can be moved up and down the screen or switched off altogether if you prefer) complementing good descriptive text descriptions and a fairly comprehensive parser.

Responses are nicely creepy at times and occasionally the game presents you with excruciating puns on the ghostly theme. I found that these little asides did much to dispell the scarier implications of the plot without detracting from the atmosphere too much. It is, however, open to question just how horrific a game can be anyway – see the horror article this month on page 35. If the man who plays Freddy Krueger thinks games can't cut the mustard in a suitably gory fashion then who am I to disagree? On the other hand, I can't help feeling that he never played *Lurking Horror*...

If you're used to object oriented adventures you'll find *Scapeghost* quite a challenge. Lateral thinking is definitely required to complete the game and the satisfaction of working out the answer to some of the puzzles is equivalent to that gained from the solving of entire games with more conventional plots.

What a shame there won't be any more text adventures from the software house which has given so much pleasure over the years. Scapeghost definitely marks the end of an era; let's hope the HUGE games are an adequate replacement.

Definitely a sad farewell this, and no good riddance. Perhaps nostalgia will one day persuade Level 9 to give us another adventure.

LANDSCAPE 70
Not a tremendous number of locations, but what there are are well described.

ENCOUNTERS......................................85
Great fun conversing with your fellow ghosts – and mortals.

CHALLENGE...85
Get your thinking cap on for this one – it's not easy.

SYSTEM 85
All the features you'd expect such as a comprehensive parser, ramsave/load, oops etc.

ACE RATING
885

Don't let the scenario put you off. *Scapeghost* is spine wriggling rather than spine chilling. A great challenge and lots of kick- yourself puzzle solutions.

KAYDEN GARTH

Geman fantasy from EAS GOLD SELECTION.

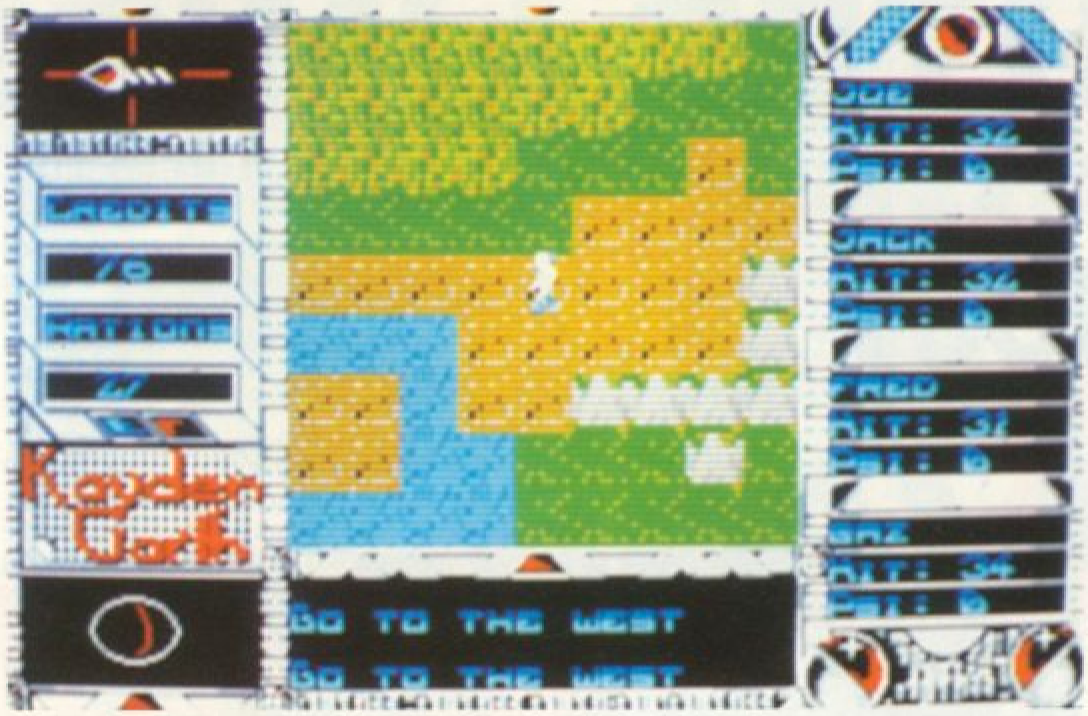
Funny how whenever a style of game becomes popular we see folks with little appreciation of the niceties of the genre jumping on the bandwagon. *Kayden Garth* is a case in point.

According to the press release this is a highly complex dragons and dungeons game with numerous traps and opponents to make your task difficult. Quite why it was felt necessary to add opponents and traps to the game is beyond me as the operating system itself contains enough traps and misleading information to satisfy the most hardened masochist – and that's before you even start to play.

Kayden Garth is a detention planet in the year 2465 where the prisoners have rebelled. You are the commander of a reconnaissance unit sent to the planet to shed light on occurrences there and put down the rebellion.

The game is a fairly standard RPG with an overhead view of outdoor locations and 3D for dungeons. The four characters for your party can be chosen from eight races/professions. Statistics can be re-rolled to your taste before saving your party to disk – the original game disk! In fact a spare disk can be used for saves, but nothing in the documentation signifies this. The only thing that stopped me wiping out the pre-supplied party was my habit of write-protecting all original discs.

This is not the only instance where error trapping is either inadequate or non-existent. The manual supplied gives a list of keys for the C64 and a short warning not to press the



GO TO THE WEST
GO TO THE WEST

***Kayden Garth* on the ST. How is it that RPG games like this so often fail to impress? There have been dozens of releases, but only a handful are worth playing. Stick to *Ultima*, that's my advice...**

wrong key as this could load an old score and wipe out progress to date. Fine, but the ST uses some rather different keystrokes (discovered by expensive trial and error) and again the load/save routines are not error trapped. It should not be necessary to have to constantly use the physical write-protect instead of an "Are you sure?" type screen prompt.

Control of the game is probably the worst I have ever seen. Moving around on the overhead view landscape involves the square bracket keys for east/west, the minus key for south and believe it or not SHIFT/@ for north – great fun while attempting to run away from an approaching enemy. As usual the sprite representing your party is centered on the map but movement leaves much to be desired. Motion is very slow and jerky with no key repeat making journeys from A to B tedious and frustrating.

UNDERGROUND

Exploring underground has its little teasers too. Dungeons are shown in 3D perspective which gives absolutely no sense of movement if you happen to be in a long corridor with no visible exits – not even a flicker. You'll need to cast a spell to appreciate this though as the dungeons are unlit so the party requires a light source. Easier said than done, unfortunately. After equipping my party in the local town with several torches each I entered the dungeon, pressed L as instructed to use my lamp and...darkness, plus a message "You have no torch". Oh yes I have, I insisted, I've just paid hard credits for them. Only trouble is, there appears to be no command for inventory so I was unable to prove my point.

Combat brings up a display of your character and the opposing foe. There seems to be no way of adjusting marching order so weaker members are effectively in the front line. Nor is there any way of controlling which member of the party is attacking (and taking the foe's return of fire). Messages appear during the battle to say who has attacked who and what resulted eg. "Faranter shots (sic) at the alien but misses" or "Spell casted (sic)". Apparently the monsters don't just do the fighting, they wrote the screen messages as well.

Anyone who's played most of the overhead view RPG-influenced games (E.G. *Legend of*

LANDSCAPE 50
Pretty average presentation but close-ups of battles are nicely drawn with simple but effective animation.

ENCOUNTERS..40
No control over which of your party is fighting in a particular round of battle.

CHALLENGE..35
Plenty of exploration and combat – if you can be bothered to cope with the system.

SYSTEM 10
It only crashed on me twice!

ACE RATING
350

Perhaps the plot could have made a decent shoot-em-up but as an RPG it's a disaster.

NO PROBLEM!

We'll be showering you with hints and tips every month from now on. But why don't you stake a claim to fame by sending in some of your own? We'll print help on any fantasy, RPG, or adventure game on the market. Send them on a postcard to ACE No Problem, Priory Court, 30-32 Farringdon Lane, London, EC1R 3AU. Get to it!

BLOODWYCH

To obtain plentiful supplies of money and keys, select your champions but don't recruit them yet. First go through the hall recruiting each champion you don't want, relieve them of their supplies, remove them from the party (minus weapons) then kill them. Only when all the champions you don't want are dead should you recruit the others for your quest.

Use a Vitalise spell instead of food. Renew helps restore strength. The red spell Fireball is extremely useful in the early stages. Try the yellow Terror spell to stop monsters advancing on you.

When mapping, metal doors are set halfway along wall sections while wooden ones are at the ends.

Watch out for spinners in the maze! Use compass and dropped objects to navigate.

Locked doors give a clue as to the key required. Look at the colour of the top of the door locks.

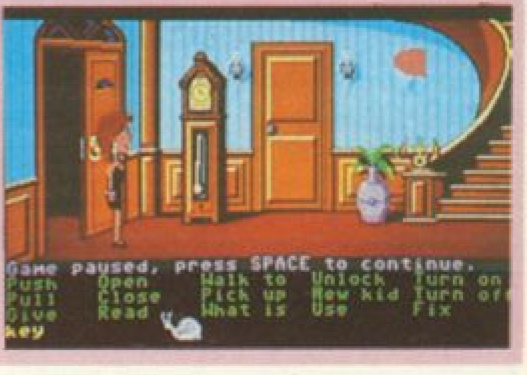
Save before entering the Serpent tower – preferably on a spare disk! Once in you can't get out again unless you do the right thing which involves going up one side of

FANTASY FUTURES

US Gold are set to release several new adventures ranging from AD&D licences to an icon driven comedy thriller.

First on the list is *Maniac Mansion*, billed as the comedy thriller that dares to be different. Different?? Isn't this the *Maniac Mansion* we reviewed here in ACE many, many moons ago? Ah, well, er, yes...but due to the popularity of Sierra games and their look-alike competitors, USG have decided to put more muscle behind this Lucasfilm title. Actually, it does deserve attention, with over 50 rooms, all sorts of zany adversaries and five different stories with different ways to win. The control method is via text menu and you can control different animated characters against some very attrative backgrounds. Lots of fun if you're into American teen culture, it will be available for C64 D, Atari ST, Amiga and IBM/PC.

Pool of Radiance is finally being released for the ST, Amiga and Mac 'before Christmas', thoughtfully preceded by the follow up game *Hillsfar* which should be out as you read this.



Game paused, press SPACE to continue.

Maniac Mansion

the tower, down again to the bottom, then back up the other side and out.

COLOUR OF MAGIC

You must eat the meat in part one to be able to kill the troll in part two.

DEJA VU II

You can get money by cheating in the casino (recognise the dealer?)

BLIZZARD PASS

To get through the window – get the snow. It will turn to slush in your hands. Put the slush in the cracks around the window – it will freeze and crack the rock and the window will fall away.

DUNGEON MASTER

Try to lure monsters to a doorway and close the door on top of them.

Examine walls for secret buttons – some are minute!

Practise casting spells and fighting. Even if you cast spells at thin air, throw objects ahead of you or fight walls or anything it counts as practise and helps to gain a level. Don't worry if a spell fails – it's still practise. Don't practise casting fireballs against walls!

WOLFMAN

To lift the flagstone at the top of the tower you need to turn into a wolfman by howling at the moon.

FRANKENSTEIN

To stop the boat from sinking 'plug leak with hemp'.

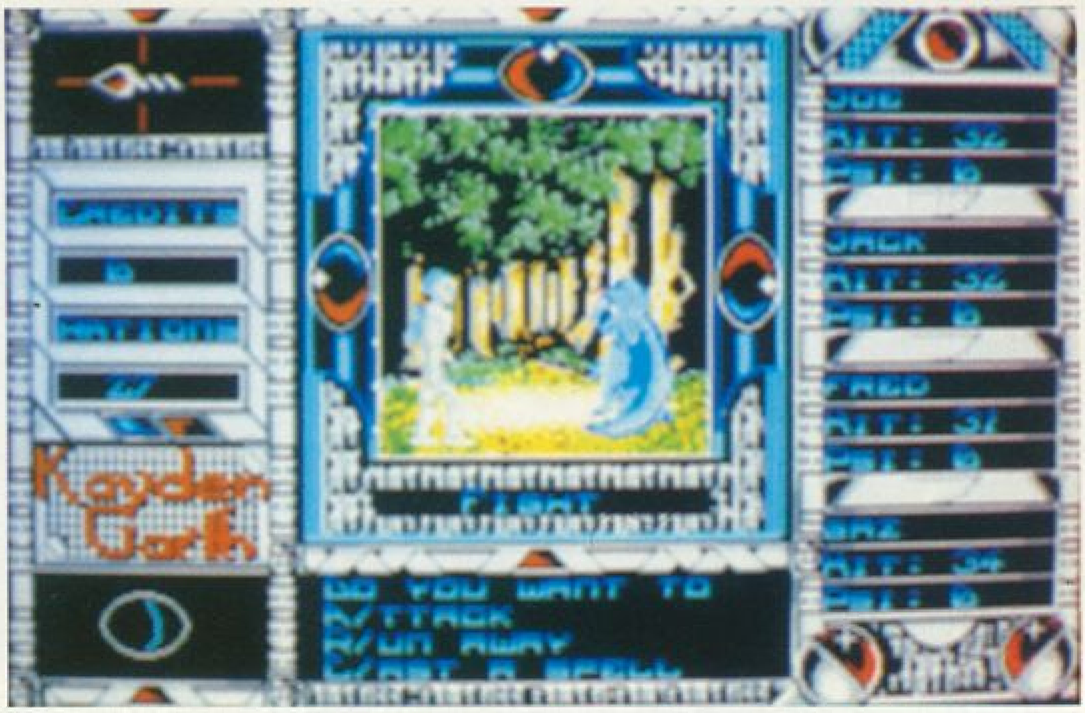
DRACULA

If you're attacked by birds, close the window.

If you're attacked by a dog, look around and give it the bone.

Blacksilver, *Questron II* etc) knows that most of them offer primitive gameplay but, in recompense, dish up adequate atmosphere and lasting interest. *Kayden*, unfortunately, doesn't. Only recommended for confirmed masochists.

Meanwhile, EAS have another title coming out. You can find out more about it in the Future Fantasy box at the bottom of this page.



Kayden Garth again – It's a pity the game isn't as good as the graphics.

SWORDS OF TWILIGHT

FREE FALL fantasy/RPG

On loading this new RPG from Free Fall my initial impression was of its resemblance to the Ultima series, with overhead views of the playing area and opportunities to converse with other characters. Further play maintained that impression. The other main resemblance is to Gauntlet style games where several characters move independently around the playing area.

The game concerns your quest to recover the Swords of Shambala and that's about the full extent of the plot as far as I can see. Instead of describing a complex scenario, the manual concentrates instead on promoting the multi-player aspect of the game. In fact this is the main thing that sets Swords of Twilight apart from run of the mill RPGs. Whereas normally you control each member of your party, this game offers the opportunity for up to three players to each control their own character, either co-operating or backstabbing each other. For solo play the computer controls the two spare characters and you can do little to direct their behaviour.

Around two thirds of the screen is taken up by four large boxes. Three of these each contain a head and shoulders view of a character together with a note of name and mood. The rest of the box is blank for the most part and is used for messages during the game such as "You tire" or menus which allow action selections during play. The fourth box is blank most of the time and used only during encounters when the NPC's name and mood are shown in a similar manner to the player characters.

All this character display leaves only the

MORE DRAGONS

While the bookshops keep thrusting fat paperbacks under our noses by Weis and Hickman about dragons, twins, legends and so on, USG are soldiering on with the AD&D license and giving us, in the run up to Christmas, the next AD&D product *Dragons of Flame*.

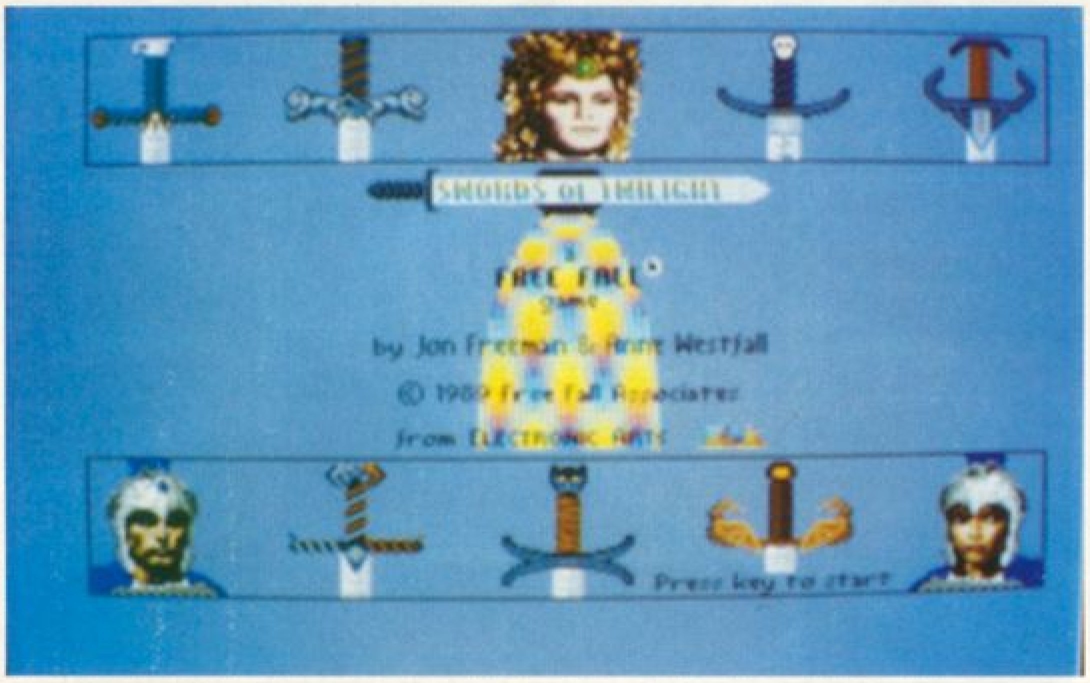
Available on most formats *Dragons of Flame* is billed as an action game rather than role playing and the plot predictably continues the fight to save Krynn from the domination of Takhisis, the Queen of Darkness. Play involves the use of the Disks of Mishakal (recovered in the earlier games) to aid the companions on their quest to free the slaves of Pax Tharkis.

The AD&D contract has three years to run and SSI has a policy of producing five such games a year. Under development is *War of the Lance* which is the first AD&D computer wargame and will offer fully detailed tactical or quick combat options and allow you to engage in diplomacy, send parties of heroes on quests to discover magical items and ulimately conquer the enemy.

One noteworthy point about these games – several were produced by none other than Mike Woodroffe, who older readers may recall was one of the driving forces behind adventure software in the UK in the early '80s, starting such companies as Adventure International (who gave us the Scott Adams games) and Adventuresoft of *Gremlins* fame.

BUILD YOUR OWN COWBOY

This is certainly a step beyond Meccano. If you fancy being the star of your own wild west adventure watch out for *Far West*, also from E.A.S. (of *Kayden Garth* infamy) which combines elements of a role-playing game, a simulation and an arcade game. The aim is to survive and make money by creating your own cowboy, buying guns, food, beer etc, entering the wilderness by train or horse, and hunting bears or building yourself a gold mine. Amiga only (£19.99) due out now.



Swords of Twilight **– shades of RPG, but the scenario is about as original as your average shoot-em-up.**

central third of the screen to show the playing area. The view while moving around the land and indoor locations is a standard overhead style. Each character marches around independently with simple animation to maintain the sense of movement. A nice touch here is that injured members of the party often lag behind the others with the animation speed slowing down to give the impression of a bad limp – very atmospheric.

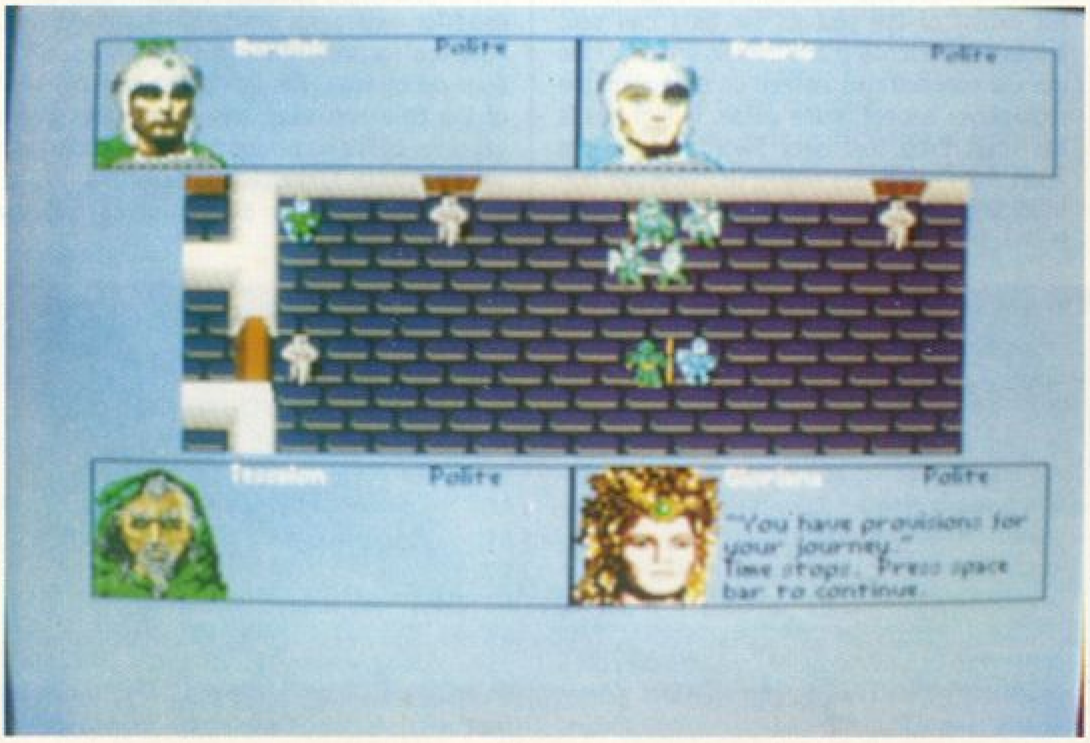
The game is set on a variety of different worlds – each having the same visual layout but with different inhabitants and magical qualities. Access between worlds is via gates leading to the Rainbow Road. Most of the gates are guarded by dragons who enjoy a natter with the party before allowing it to pass. Once on the Rainbow road you can choose to drop off at any of the other worlds – each identified by a colour coded gate.

Combat is carried out by placing your character adjacent to the enemy and facing it, then holding down the trigger (key or joystick button). The system is described as arcade style but this shouldn't put off those with slower reflexes as co-ordination is more important than speed.

There's a comprehensive magic system. Conjurers, witches, wizards, enchanters and sorcerers may be included in your party, each with their own batch of spells. Casting spells drains the character's energy, the degree determined by the complexity of the spell. The keyboard is used to prepare and cast spells and requires entry of either the mantra or elemental involved together with the name of the spell.

ALL TOGETHER NOW

What sets this game apart from many of the others around is the multi-player system. For three players to take part, two joysticks are needed. The other player uses the keyboard. The mouse cannot be used at all. Each player controls his character independently, but the party cannot split up too much and must always be within sight of each other on the playing area. A character attempting to move too far away from the others is simply blocked from moving until the the others catch up.



"You have provisions for your journey."
Time stops. Press space bar to continue.

Swords of Twilight **– the combat system is the best thing about it, but even that is likely to pall in time...**

During the multi player game each character has a variety of menu options which include talking, getting and dropping objects and shifting moods. Mood shifting is an important part of the game strategy. Characters can be hostile, wary, polite or friendly at will, each mood affecting the results of interaction with NPCs. Thus hostility towards a potentially friendly character will reduce the chances of eliciting useful information, while being friendly to a hostile ogre is likely to have fatal effects. In the solo game the computer controlled characters tend to follow the lead of the player's character as to mood – but not always!

Movement of computer controlled characters in the solo game can be fraught with difficulties, especially if the player character is a magic user 'leading' fighters from the back. Left to themselves the other members of your party are likely to bang their heads against a wall adjacent to the door you have just passed through, or take off on their own account to attack the monster you had just decided to run away from. Careful leadership is a must and adds considerably to the enjoyment of the game.

After several hours of sustained play, becoming impatient with the general lack of originality in presentation and plot, my interest in continuing was saved by a gradual appreciation of the tactical nature of encounters. This is a game that grows on you gradually. When the time came to break off play to write this review I was definitely reluctant. Hopefully I'll have the chance to tackle *Swords of Twilight* in greater depth in the future.

LANDSCAPE 45
Generally unimpressive and run of the mill, but saved from oblivion by character animation while injured.

ENCOUNTERS....................................75
Combat is simple and effective but conversation, while essential, requires patience and thought.

CHALLENGE.......................................85
Definitely a thinker's game. The strategic possibilities compensate for lack of action.

SYSTEM 60
Pity about the mouse – not everyone can muster a second joystick – especially adventurers.

ACE RATING
750

Takes some patience to get started but there's to be a good game in there with persistence.

MINI TIP

PERSONAL NIGHTMARE
Getting started – wait around in the bar of the Dog and Duck. After a while Mr Roberts, the registrar will arrive. He takes off his jacket and hangs it up. Keep waiting and you'll see Susan Blandford arrive, then after a while Jimmy Blandford leaves. Shortly, a screech of brakes is heard from outside. Now timing is important. As soon as Mr Roberts leaves the pub look in his jacket and get the key. Immediately leave the pub and you'll see Jimmy Blandford lying in the road. Examine his body before Susan arrives – you'll find a roll of film, the key to Ivy Cottage and a broken num-

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ADVENTURE ORGANISATIONS

Stuck? Need help? Need friends? Here's the latest on the adventure get-together scene...

DIAL-A-TIP

Having operated both write-in and phone-in helplines for several years and therefore understanding the effort involved, I was intrigued to hear of a new adventure helpline set up by Jackie Wright under the name Guiding Light. What makes this line different is the use of one of those famous 0898 numbers which the national press features regularly on behalf of recipients of large bills.

Guiding Light's policy, however, is not that of maximum gain but of fair reward for the time and effort involved in manning the line. To this end they positively discourage youngsters in particular from staying on the line any longer than is absolutely necessary.

With access to a wealth of hints and tips (some of which grace this month's column – thank you) together with knowledgeable adventurers on-line, Guiding Light are able to help with most games on all formats. The lines are open 7 days a week (noon to 8.00pm) and calls are charged at 25p per minute cheap rate and 38p per minute at all other times. The number to call is 0898 338 933.

INTERACTION

New to the scene of adventure clubs is Inter-Action. For £15 you receive 6 bi-monthly dossiers of at least 50 pages featuring reviews of the latest avdentures, RPGs and strategy games, previews, gossip, hints, maps, letters, articles etc. Also included in the price is access to a telephone helpline open ten hours a week. More details from Inter-Action, The Cottage, Ashford Carbonell, Ludlow, Shropshire, SY8 4DB.

SSA

Budding and established software authors, artists, designers and musicians may be interested in The Society of Software Authors. SSA is a collection of people with similar interests sharing knowledge and protecting their interests as a group. The aim is to ensure that the relationship between publishers and authors is fair and professional and that the authors' interests are protected in the long term. Membership offers pracTical advice and representation on industry issues such as copyright, contracts and pay. Full members (already published authors) pay £150 while associate members (still trying) may join for £50. More details from The Society of Software Authors, 6 Callow Croft, Burbage, Wiltshire, SN8 3TB.

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Remember Sonia Griffiths who has been running HALA (The Hints Archive for Lost Adventurers) for over four years now? HALA is a totally free helpline operating a barter system. Help is provided on any adventure in exchange for an SAE and some tips of your own. Over the last year Sonia has had to wind down the activities of the club due to other commitments but is now set to help the world again. A new feature is a free telephone helpline 10.00am to 11.00pm Mon-Sat which can be reached on 0482-654036. The address is 38 Bellfield Drive, Willerby, East Yorks, HU10 6HQ. A last word from Sonia... "I'm still the only free club in England and proud of it."

SYNTAX

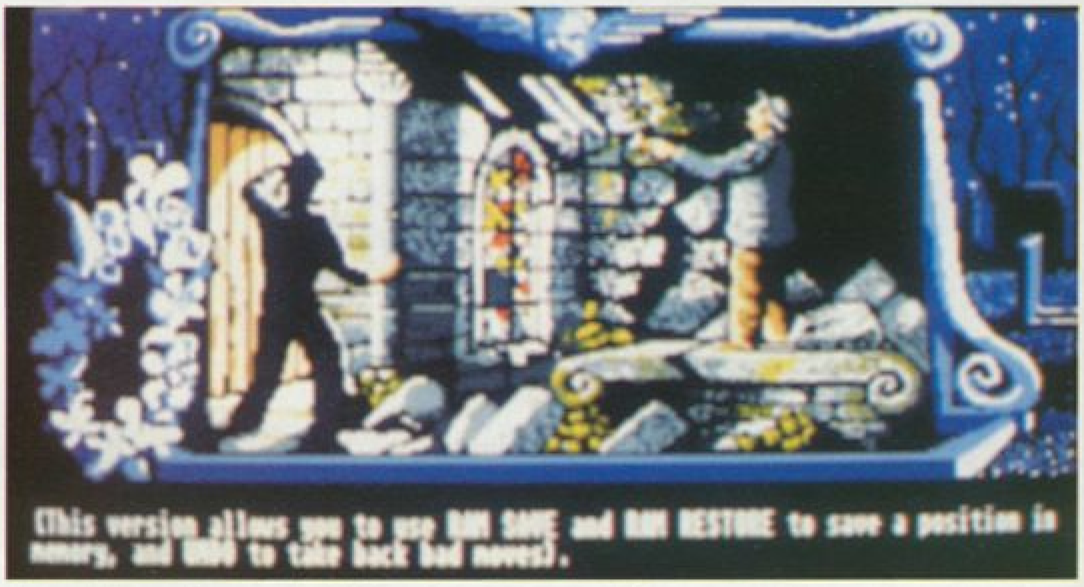
ST owners who fancy a stock of reviews, solutions and hints on disc could do worse than SynTax disc magazine. Published by Sue Medley and John Barnsley, each disc is crammed with adventure information. Issues are bi-monthly and details of price etc can be obtained by sending an SAE to Sue Medley, 9 Warwick Rd, Sidcup, Kent, DA14 6LJ.

A similar publication but this time on paper and catering for all computer formats is Spellbreaker. This is a monthly magazine which also includes maps and costs £1.25. For further details contact Mike Brailsford, 19 Napier Place, South Parks, Glenrothes, Fife, KY6 1DX

PROBE

For general adventure chat, tips, solutions and other related topics the long established Adventure Probe gives an excellent monthly read covering all machines. Sample copies are available for £1.25 from Adventure Probe, 24 Maes Y Cwm, Llandudno, Gwynedd, LL30 1JE

SCAPEGHOST COMPO!


(This version allows you to use RAM SAVE and RAM RESTORE to save a position in memory, and UNDO to take back bad moves).

***Scapeghost* – five copies waiting for five clever readers...**

It's the end of an era. Level 9, the adventure company started by the Austin family, have been responsible for inspiring and maintaining the British adventure market since their first game, *Collossal Adventure* hit the shelves over six years ago. For several years after that, they retained an undisputed number one slot with a succession of highly imaginitive and technically superior text adventures.

Scapeghost is their last true adventure title. In common with their later releases it includes fabulous graphics (hand digitised, as opposed to the early style of line-drawn L9 pics) and of course the parsing and character handling systems the company are famous for.

However, what has always made Level 9 games successful has been the eccentric originality of their game designs and the technical excellence of their products. Now they're developing a new range using their more advanced graphics programming system – so maybe this isn't the end of an era, but the beginning of a new one.

Whichever way you look at it, we're determined to celebrate, and Level 9 have got five copies of *Scapeghost* to give away. All you have to do is send us, on a postcard, the correct answers to the following two questions:

1. What was the first Level 9 game to feature graphics?
2. Which Level 9 adventure was modelled on the original mainframe adventure game programmed by Crowther and Woods?

The prizes go to the first five correct answers drawn out of the hat on 7th December 1989 – so get your entries in pronto on a postcard to ACE Level 9, Priory Court, 30-32 Farringdon Lane, London, EC1R 3AU.

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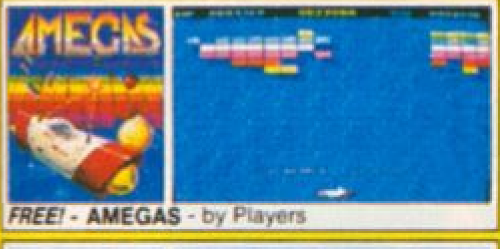
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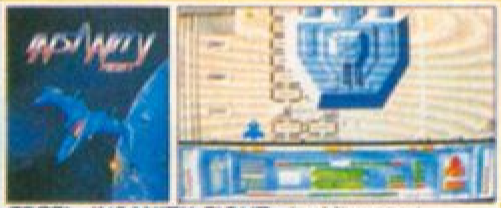
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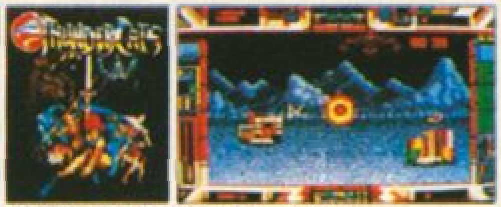
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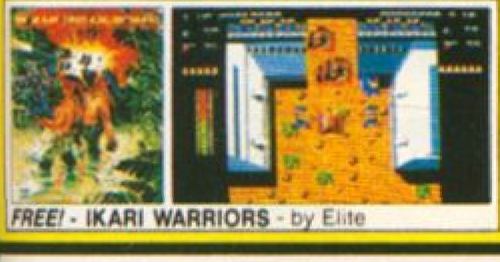
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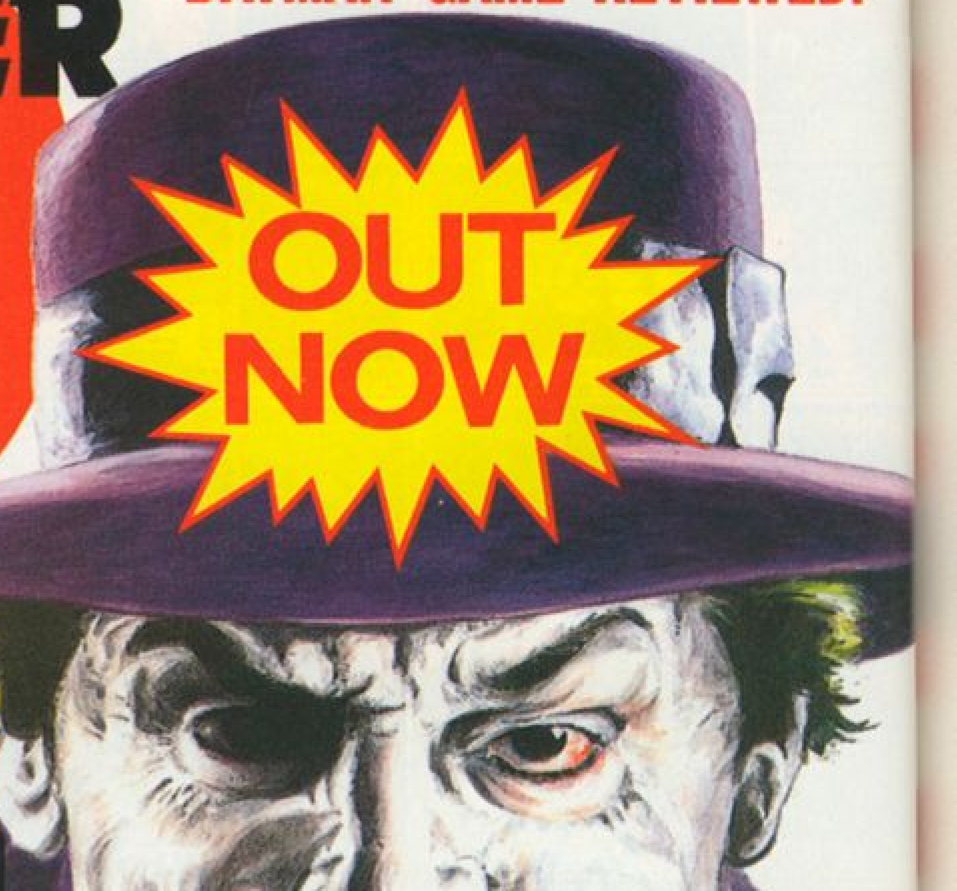

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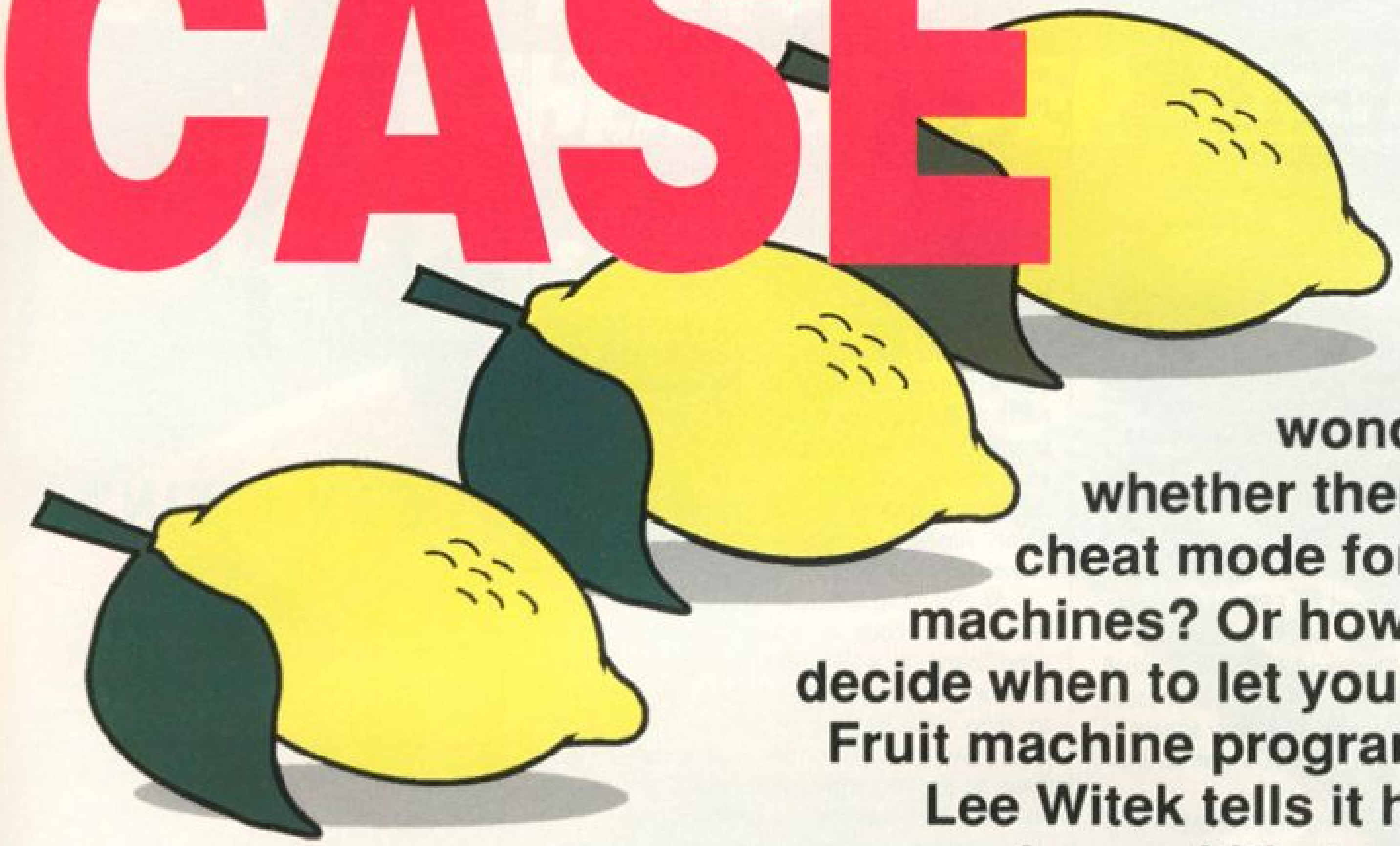

Ever wondered whether there's a cheat mode for fruit machines? Or how they decide when to let you win? Fruit machine programmer Lee Witek tells it how it is...and it's tough....

A LONG TIME ago, before computers controlled practically everything you can mention, from washing machines to nuclear reactors, fruit machines were simple electro-mechanical affairs where you stuck your tuppence in the slot, pulled out the handle, the reels spun, and more often than not you lost. When the handle was pulled springs would spin the reels, which had a series of encoding holed around them. At the moment the reels stopped, a light would be shone through these holes and if it made it through all the reels onto an array of photocells then the coin mechanism was activated and you won lots of lovely cash. Winning amounts were decided depending on which photo-cells are activated by the light falling through the encoding holes.

Fruit machines in those days were (and still mostly are) only superficially a game of chance. In fact, the machine controls absolutely everything and the player's role is limited to pressing buttons and clinging to a naive belief that 'chance' may favour him. One thing you can be sure of, of course, is that the machine will make a profit, since this is what it's there for.

Things haven't changed much, except for the fact that nowadays fruit machines are awesomely complex beasts. Modern AWP's (Amusement With Prizes – have you been reading your ACE Arcades Jargon column?) boast a vast array of gimmicks, whistles, and bells to attract the punter into parting with his hard-earned cash.

INSIDE THE FRUIT CASE

In order to manage the workings of a game, there is a computer (they get everywhere) sitting at the heart of the machine. This controls everything from the spinning of the reels to paying out the money if and when you win.

Two of the biggest fruit machine manufacturers, Bell and Barcrest, both use a similar setup to control their machines. This consists of a small micro-processor system with a 6809 as its CPU. If you ever owned a Dragon 32 micro, you'll be familiar with this little beast. It's a fairly fast 8-bit processor and a predecessor of the current 68000 series used in the ST and the Amiga.

The processor board has a small amount of RAM (8-16K), masses of I/O ports to communicate with all the bells and whistles, and a cartridge port. It's the latter that really provides the oomph behind the machine, because the

RING THAT BELL

On the sound front, most fruit machines don't fair too well. The majority of machines are equipped with a bog standard AY-3-8910 sound chip. This, believe it or not, is the same chip as is used in the Amstrad CPC, ST, and most Spectrums. It is, in this programmer's humble opinion, crap – no matter how many times an ST owner tells you it's better than an Amiga, etc. etc....

However, things are, depending on your point of view, looking up for fruit machine sonics. Some manufacturers are experimenting with various synthesiser chips and sample players, so you can expect the decibel level to rise in the arcades quite dramatically in the near future. At the moment, when you walk past an arcade and hear a stereo sound track, it's coming from a video machine – but not for much longer...

Since adaptability is the name of the game here, it's possible that the manufacturers may develop a sample manipulation program similar to that developed by Rainbow Arts (see the Crocks of Gold feature in this issue on page 109). This would enable new sets of sound samples to be loaded in on cartridge.

control program is stored on EPROM (erasable read-only memory chip) which is built into a 'program module'. This module forms a small cartridge that fits into the slot on the processor board. The modules are, in fact, very similar to those used on the old Atari VCS games consoles.

This system allows easy reprogramming of the machine by simply issuing new cartridges. These cartridges are very complex and often hold 64K of code or even, for the more complex casino fruit machines, 128K. When you consider that an average 8-bit arcade game will rarely have more than 16K of code (excluding the graphics data) you can see that these control programs are no chickens.

Two other components inside the casing re the coin mechanism and the reels. The coin mechanism will accept your coins, sort them into separate hoppers, and pay out your winnings. It identifies the value of the coin you feed it by letting it drop through a magnetic field. Each size of coin will distort the field in a specific way, and this distortion is measured by the coin mechanism so that the value can be accurately recorded. Bad news for the punters: this system of detecting coins is fairly tamper-proof and stops people putting washers and other bits of metal in to get free credits on the machine.

ALL UNDER CONTROL

A lot of people still seem to thing that, because the reels are mechanical, they actually spin due to momentum rather than in a precise way. This is sadly, not the case. In fact, the hideous truth is that the machine actually knows the exact finishing position of the reels BEFORE they've even started spinning!

Fruit machine programmers, however, are clever lads. How many times have you seen the reels spin to a halt just one position short of a winning row? Often, no doubt, and each time you see it you think you'll have just one more go! This is, of course, done on purpose to add to the 'excitement' of losing money.

The secret is that the reels are attached to stepper motors which are under the precise control of the on-board computer. serves you right for being so greedy...

WHERE DO THEY COME FROM

Trying to think of new ideas that will attract people to playing new fruit machines is not an easy job, but someone has to do it! Recently one fruit machine manufacturer set up a competition for all its employees (from the tea ladies to the production line) to come up with new features for adding to machines – proof of the fact that new approaches often elude even the design teams.

However, once the basic format of the game has been decided upon, all the required payout percentages for each feature are worked out using a spreadsheet. All this info is then passed on to the programmer who sets about coding the game.

The program is written in a variety of high and low-level languages. Barcrest for example use assembly language for the speed critical parts of the code and Forth for the rest of the program. The advantage of Forth is that it is very flexible and allows you to define all the necessary routines for flashing the lights and so on. Jupiter Ace owners would have a ball on a one-armed bandit!

All this programming is pretty heavy-duty work – the code is edited/assembled/compiled/linked on a DEC VAX mainframe. All the programmers are users on the same machine to allow easy transfer of files and access to library functions. The code is then transferred down to the microprocessor board, in a mock up of the fruit machine, via an RS232 link.

Once the machine is finished, it's sent for 'beta testing' by people with nothing better to do and then on to various test sites around the country to see if the punters like the new design. If it takes loadsamoney then the machine goes into full production and gets sent all over the country.

MONDAY NIGHT FOOTBALL

Time Machine

CAN I WIN?

No.

Most fruit machines pay out around 70-80% of the money which is fed into them. This pay-out percentage has been carefully calculated through experiments on apes and people to give the maximum addiction to the machine. The chances of winning each feature on the machine are carefully worked out by the designers so that no matter how skillful the player is, the payout over a large number of games will stay around the target 70-80%.

When the player presses the start button, the computer chooses, AT RANDOM, the new positions of the reels. If this position is a win, the chances are that the computer will promptly forget it and generate a new position with either no win or a lower value win. This is done to stop the machine from paying out too much, naturellement. Only when the computer is finally happy with the spin position it will move the reels.

The bad news is that the other supposedly 'random' and 'skill' features are worked out in the same way and modified to stay within the target 70-80%..

WHAT ABOUT POKES?

OK, so here's the nitty gritty. Fruit machines have a small amount of RAM and some buttons. How about cheat modes, then?

Well, there's good news and bad news. The good news is that there ARE cheat modes on fruit machines. The bad news is that you can't operate them from the front panel alone. They are designed for testers and work in conjunction with the internal board. Pressing certain buttons in combination will then force a feature to a win or a lose. Like games, most machines have cheat modes but they are not..ho ho...given over to the public.

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THE REST....
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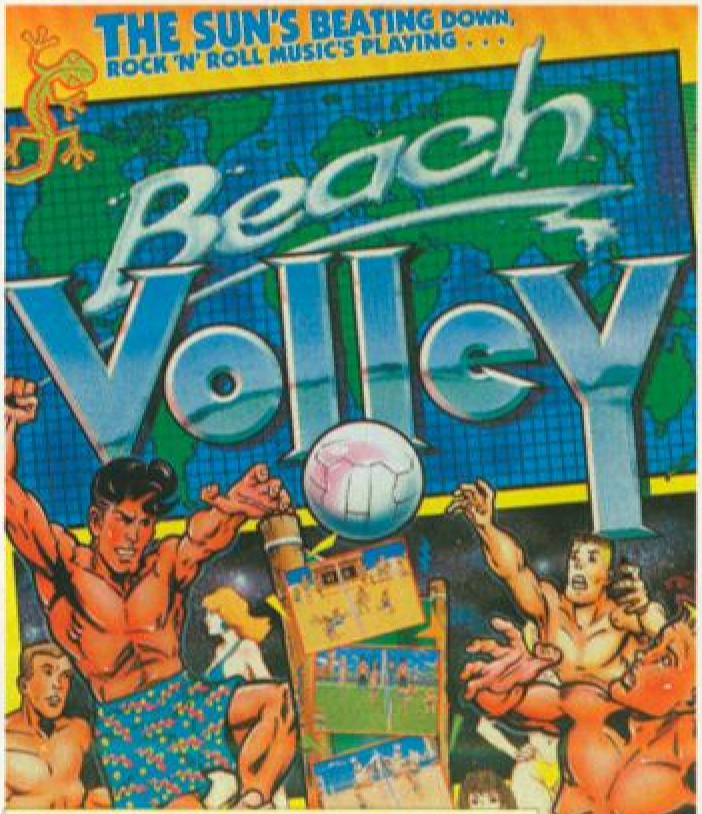
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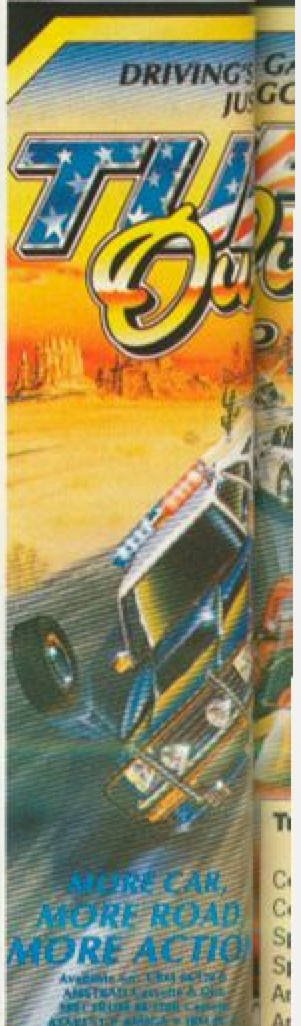

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2

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from US Gold

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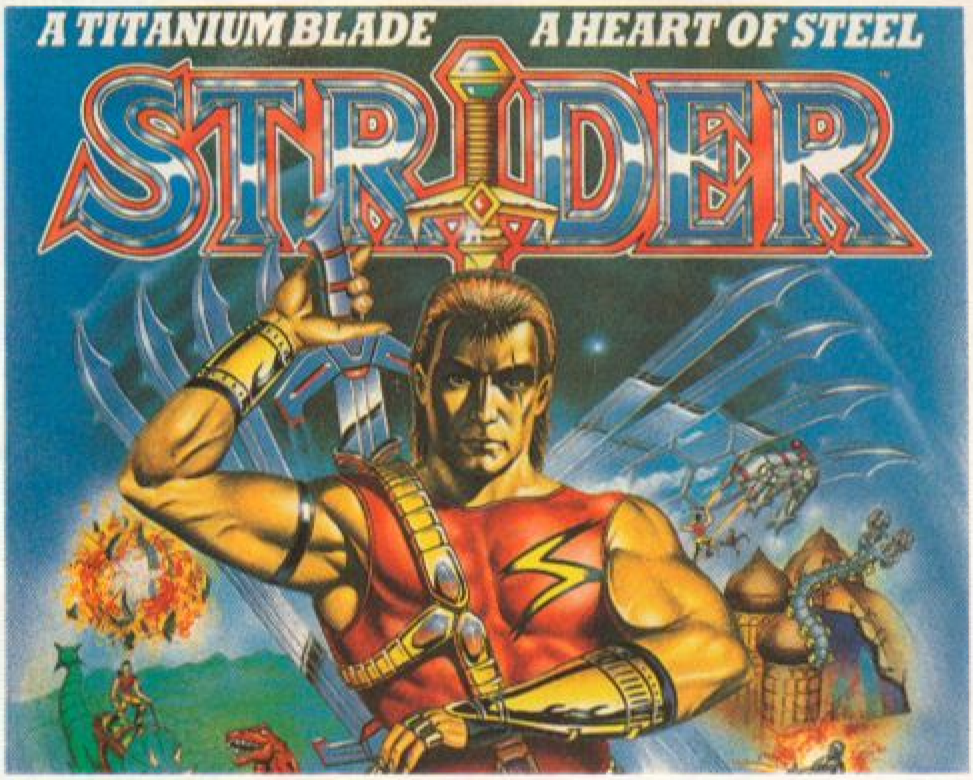
"Arcade fans who like their games spiced with plenty of action and rushing around are certainly going to enjoy this."
Amiga Format



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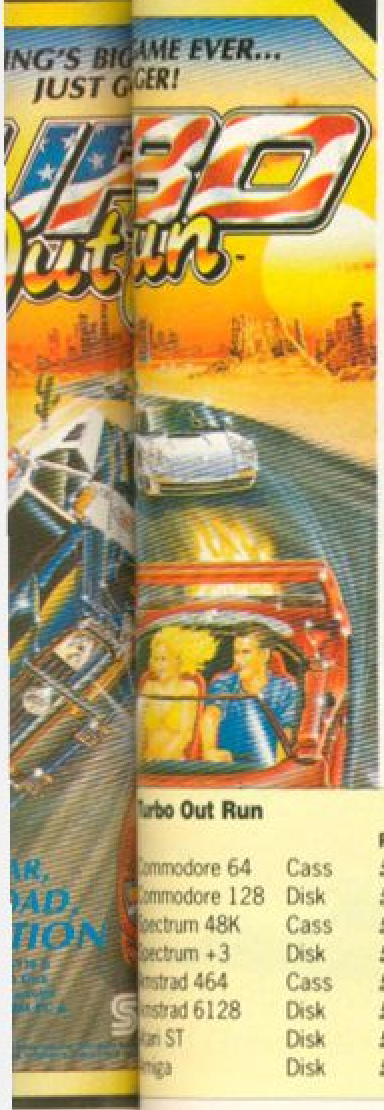

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Which games are going to be next month's hot titles? And which readers are going to walk away with prizes for predicting the right ones? Find out all about the new games chart section that's setting the industry talking

GAMES YOU'VE GOT TO HAVE 166

The ACE updated guide to the games you just have to buy. Check them out, and then look at your collection, remember it's coming up to Christmas and give yourself a treat

GETTING ANIMATED.................................178

How do professional animators go about their work. Duncan Evans celebrates the release of Amiga Fantavision (see p56) with a look at modern animation techniques ....

***GRAND* SLAM 176**

Grandslam are kicking off their launch of Saint and Greavsie, the latest football trivia quiz sensation, with an exclusive competition in which you can walk away with £250 worth of gear including a match quality football signed by Saint and Greavsie themselves, plus other goodies

COMPO RESULTS 180

Are you in for a big prize? Or even a little one. Find out on page

THE ACE PRIZE PUZZLE 182

Have you got a brain the size of a planet? Of course you have, and of course this month you really are going to win that exclusive prize for eggheads

WIN A FERRARI!..184

Domark are falling over themselves to reward lucky ACE readers with FIVE Ferraris. Radio controlled, that is, but still loadsafun.

LOGO COMPO 186

Logotron are about to release Bad Company and Star Blaze – and you could be first on the street with a FREE copy. Find out more on page 186.

MYSTERY PAGES ....174,185, 188, 190, & 191

At the time of going to press, these mystery pink pages were still blushing virgins. Find out how they've been corrupted by the ACE Team!

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Street Cred Football	1.99
Street Fighter	2.99
Street Gang Football	2.99
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Theatre Europe	2.99
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Traz	2.99
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War Machine	2.99
Way of the Exploding Fist	1.99
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Yie Ar Kung Fu	2.99
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Altered Beast	13.99	16.99
Archipelagos	16.99	16.99
Astaroth Angel of Death	16.99	N/A
Balance of Power1990	16.99	16.99
Barbarian (Palace)	6.99	6.99
Barbarian 2 (Palace)	16.99	16.99
Barbarian 2(Psygnosis)	N/A	16.99
Bankok Knights	13.99	16.99
Batman the Movie	13.99	16.99
Battle Chess	16.99	16.99
Beach Volley	13.99	16.99
Bloodwych	16.99	16.99
Bomber	16.99	16.99
California Challenge (UK)	N/A	8.50
Carrier Command	16.99	16.99
Chess Player 2150	16.99	16.99
Conflicts Europe	16.99	16.99
Continental Circus	13.99	13.99
Crazy Cars 2	13.99	16.99
Daily Dbl Horse Racing	13.99	13.99
Dark Century	16.99	16.99
Deluxe Paint 3	N/A	54.99
Demons Tomb	13.99	13.99
Demons Winter	16.99	16.99
Dragons Spirit	13.99	13.99
Dungeon Master	16.99	16.99
Dungeon Master Editor	6.99	6.99
Dynamite Dux	16.99	13.99
Elite	16.99	16.99
Emperor of the Mines	16.99	16.99
F-16 Combat Pilot	16.99	16.99
Faery Tale	N/A	13.99
Falcon Mission Disc	13.99	13.99
Fantavision	N/A	29.99
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Ferrari Formula	16.99	16.99
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Football Manager 2	13.99	13.99
Football Manager 2 Expansion Kit	8.99	8.99
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Future Wars	16.99	16.99
Gauntlet 2	13.99	16.99
Gemini Wings	13.99	13.99
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Highway Patrol	16.99	16.99
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Keef the Thief	N/A	16.99
Kelly X	6.99	6.99
Kennedy Aproach	16.99	16.99
Kenny Dalglish	13.99	13.99
Kick Off	13.99	13.99
Knightforce	16.99	16.99
Kult	16.99	16.99
Lancaster	N/A	13.99
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Shoot 'Em Up Construction Kit	N/A	19.99
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Styx	13.99	13.99
Stunt Car	16.99	16.99
Super Wonder Boy	16.99	16.99
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Xenophobe	16.99	

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	SP	CO
3-D Pool	6.99	6.99
Action Fighter	6.99	6.99
Altered Beast	6.99	6.99
A.P.B.	6.99	6.99
Batman the Movie	6.99	6.99
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Carrier Command	6.99	6.99
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Continental Circus	6.99	6.99
Crazy Cars 2	6.50	N/A
Dark Century	6.50	N/A
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Dragon Spirit	6.99	6.99
Dynamite Dux	6.99	6.99
Emlyn Hughes Soccer	6.99	6.99
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New Zealand Story	6.99	6.99
Operation Wolf	6.50	6.99
Passing Shot	6.99	6.99
Paul Gasgoine Super Soccer	6.99	6.99
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THE ACE STOCK MARKET

HERE'S WHERE YOU CHECK OUT WHICH GAMES ARE GETTING THE HOTTEST REVIEWS IN MAGAZINES AROUND THE COUNTRY – THE HOT RELEASES YOU SHOULDN'T MISS. YOU CAN ALSO PRACTISE YOUR GAMES MARKET SKILLS BY PREDICTING NEXT MONTH'S FIGURES – AND WINNING SOME GREAT PRIZES! THE ENTRY FORM IS ON PAGE 192.

THE 8-BIT COUNTER

Here are this month's 8-bit Top Ten titles. Batman swings in with a vengeance – great game, shame about the movie; and System 3, who owe their awesome reputation to the 8-bitters of yesteryear are still wowing them at No. 2.

BATMAN	Ocean	Ams,64,Sp	92.59
MYTH	System 3	64,Sp	91.5
UNTOUCHABLES	Ocean	64,Sp	91.5
GREGORY'S CLOCK	Mastertronic	Ams,Sp	85.25
NEW ZEALAND STORY	Ocean	Ams,64,Sp	83.67
IRON LORD	UbiSoft	64,Sp	79.75
STRIDER	US Gold	Ams,Sp	77.83
ALTERED BEAST	ACTIVISION	64,Sp	77.75
DRAGON SPIRIT	Domark	Ams,Sp	76.58
PASSING SHOT	Image Works	Ams,Sp	75.16

Runners up include: *Kendo Warrior, Operation Gunship*, and *Shinobi*.

THE 16-BIT COUNTER

If you've got a 16-bit machine, this is where you should be looking to decide how to spend your hard earned pennies this month...

F16 COMBAT PILOT	Digital Integration	Amiga	94.67
BATMAN	Ocean	Amiga	92.04
BOMBER	Activision	91.67	
XENON II: MEGABLAST	Image Works	Amiga, ST	91.33
ARTHUR	Infocom	Amiga	88.75
STRIDER	US Gold	Amiga, ST	86.8
POPULOUS: LANDS	Electronic Arts	Amiga, ST	85
WATERLOO	PSS/Mirrorsoft	Amiga, ST	84.75
BLOODWYCH	Image Works	Amiga, ST	83.75
CONTINENTAL CIRCUS	Virgin	Amiga, ST	83.42

Runners-up include *Indiana Jones, Oil Imperium*, and *Shadow of the Beast.*

THE COMPANY COUNTER

Which companies have really been starring in the media this month? Here's where we'll be giving away the biggest prizes each month if you can name the top softcos in the correct order. We give two ratings for each software house: the first is their rating for the month (which determines their current position) and the second is their 'share rating'. This is an index to their past performance, and since this is the first time we've run the listing, all software houses start at 100. Next month, if a company goes down, it's share price will fall; if it goes up, it'll rise.

The positions are determined by the ratings awarded for reviews in different magazines during the current month. This means that certain software houses may not appear in the chart until they have had products reviewed during the survey period. It also means that *in the short term* software houses who produce only one very highly rated title will score more highly than those who produce several less successful games. In the long term the system will diminish ratings dependent on only a few releases – reflecting the 'shelf life' of the titles in question.

DIGITAL INTEGRATION	94.7	100
INFOCOM	89.19	100
HIT SQUAD (OCEAN)	85.75	100
IMAGE WORKS	83.22	100
MICROPROSE	82.92	100
OCEAN	82.21	100
EPYX (US GOLD)	80.88	100
MINDSCAPE	80	100
16 BLITZ	79.83	100
PSS	79.46	100
ARTRONIC	79	100
UBI SOFT	78.35	100
MICROSTYLE	78.17	100
GRANDSLAM	78	100
ALTERNATIVE	77	100
PSYGNOSIS	76.83	100
SSI	76.19	100
ELECTRONIC ARTS	75.42	100
INFOGRAMES	75.21	100
CDS	75.13	100
ACTUAL SCREENSHOTS	74.5	100
ACTIVISION	74.09	100
MICROILLUSIONS	73.92	100
DOMARK	73.92	100
US GOLD	73.77	100
SYSTEM 3	73	100
FIREBIRD	72.76	100
ELITE SYSTEMS	71.89	100
BYTE BACK	68.88	100
KIXX	68.63	100
HEWSON	68.32	100
GAINSTAR	68.17	100
CODE MASTER	67.33	100
RELINE	66.6	100
PLAYERS PREMIER	66.17	100
RAD (THE EDGE)	65.67	100
VIRGIN	65.41	100
ACCOLADE	65.33	100
MASTERTRONIC	63.2	100
ENCORE	62.87	100
GREMLIN	61.6	100
MELBOURNE HOUSE	57.83	100
DELPHINE	52.833	100
CULT	50.7	100

THE MACHINE COUNTER

OK, here are this month's top five games for each machine. You can win mega-prizes by naming next month's top five. Check out the coupon on page...

AMIGA

XENON II: MEGABLAST	Image Works	92.6
BATMAN	Ocean	92.04
F16 COMBAT PILOT	Digital Integration	91.83
STRDIER	US Gold	89.72
BLOODWYCH	Image Works	86.5

ATARI ST

XENON II: MEGABLAST	Image Works	93.04
NEW ZEALAND STORY	Ocean	86.75
BLOOD MONEY	Psygnosis	86.5
STRDIER	US Gold	85.2
CONTINENTAL CIRCUS	Virgin	84.5

SPECTRUM

UNTOUCHABLES	Ocean	91.33
BATMAN	Ocean	89.02
NEW ZEALAND STORY	Ocean	85.75
IRON LORD	Ubisoft	82.25
PASSING SHOT	Image Works	79

COMMODORE 64

BATMAN	Ocean	95.75
UNTOUCHABLES	Ocean	91.67
NEW ZEALAND STORY	Ocean	91.67
CITADEL	Electric Dreams	88.25
TUSKER	System 3	83.75

AMSTRAC CPC

NEW ZEALAND STORY	Ocean	82.67
STRIDER	US Gold	79.93
DRAGON SPIRIT	Domark	78.25
LICENCE TO KILL	Domark	77.5
SHINOBI	Virgin	73

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LC10 COLOUR 7 colours same spec as LC10 MONO will accept black ribbons	169.52	194.95
LC24-10 24 PIN 170CPS NLQ 57CPS 7K buffer 8 fonts	200.00	230.00
NX-15 9 PIN wide carriage 120CPS NLQ30CPS 4K buffer	280.00	322.00
LC10 MONO for C64 & 128 only	149.56	172.00
LC10 Colour for C64 and 128 only	186.95	215.00
NB24-10 24 PIN 80 column 216CPS/72CPS LQ	429.52	493.95
NB24-15 24 PIN wide 136 column 216CPS/72CPS LQ	519.13	597.00
NB 15 24 PIN 136 column 300CPS/100CPS LQ	686.08	789.00
NX 15 9 PIN 136 column 120CPS/30NLQ	280.00	322.00
ND 10 9 PIN 80 column 180CPS/45CPS NLQ	293.91	338.00
ND 15 9 PIN 136 column 180CPS/45CPS NLQ	340.86	391.99
NR 10 9 PIN 80 column 240CPS/60CPS NLQ	344.34	396.00
NR 15 9 PIN as NR10, but 136 column	393.91	453.00

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STAR PRINTERS THE PROFESSIONAL SERIES	Price Ex. VAT	Price Inc. VAT
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FR-15 9 PIN this is the 15" version of the FR-10, ideally suited for the widest of printing of both A4 and A3 paper in its landscape orientation.	389.83	448.31
XB24-10 24 PIN 240CPS/80QEL slew rate-paper feed (ins per sec.) 3.6 standard buffer 27K max buf 187K super letter quality fonts 4 NLQ/LQ fonts 25 three of which are ORC fonts including code 39 bar code	389.83	448.31
XB24-15 24 PIN the XB24-15 is the wider version of the XB24-10 offering all the above facilities, but on a printer with a 15" carriage. The XB24-10 and 15 both print at 240 CPS in draft mode plus they both can coast through letter quality printing at 76CPS	513.49	590.51

All printers in this range have the option of a low cost 7 colour upgrade module which can be fitted by virtually anyone.

STAR LASER SERIES

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LASER PRINTER 8 IIT same as printer 8 but with option of 4 megabytes and an input standard 2 × 200 both have the capacity for printing portrait and landscape on the same page	Phone	Phone

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CAMERON HANDY SCANNERS	Price Ex. VAT	Price Inc. VAT
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Handy Scanner Type 2 scans in black & white width of scan 64mm • 512 points per line • speeds 3ms per line including handy painter + reader o.c.r. versions available for		
IBM PC/AT/XT.	149.43	171.85
AMIGA	149.43	171.85
ATARI ST	N/A	N/A
Handy Scanner type 4 • scans up to 16 tones of grey • width of scan 64mm speed 3ms per line • sold with handy painter for graphics • sold with handy reader for character recognition also contains its own word processing programme		
IBM PC/AT/XT AMIGA ATARI ST	236.43 225.20 N/A	271.89 258.99 N/A
CAMERON Personal A4 Scanner •, format A4, 210mm × 297mm Flat Bed operation • scan precision horizontal 8 points/mm vertical 7.7 points/mm speed 10 seconds for A4 page black/white dither mode interface card and connecting cable included requires IBM-DOS 2.0min. AMIGA – 1Mb + AMIGA DOS ATARI 1Mb with painter/reader		
IBM PC/AT/XT COMP	443.05	509.51
AMIGA	454.28	522.42
ATARI ST	N/A	N/A

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C-FAX SR enables you to send and receive faxes on any group 3 fax BABT approved	150.88	173.52
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60 Mb Hard Card	390.44	448.99
MINISCRIBE 3650 40Mb H/Disk	207.83	239.00

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SAMSUNG PCS	Price Ex. VAT	Price Inc. VAT
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SPC3000V/2 Dual Drive XT	477.16	548.75
SPC6000 20Mb HD	1100.00 1265.00	
SPC6000 SD	885.00	1017.75
SPC 6500/3 and EGA Card	1139.00 1309.85	

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PC10 111 DD CM EGA framework and mouse	1073.05	1234.00
PC10 111 DD MM MPS1230 printer 9 PIN AT style keyboard framework and mouse	850.44	978.00
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MONO	934.79	1075.00
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MONO	1073.92	1235.00
COLOUR	1208.70	1390.00
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PC60 TOWER 386	Phone	Phone

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PCW 8512	404.34	465
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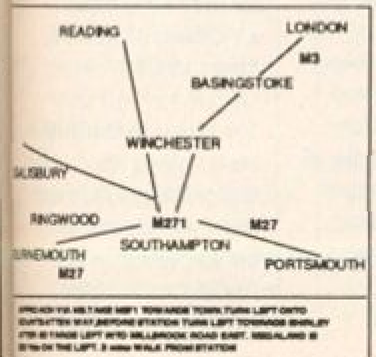

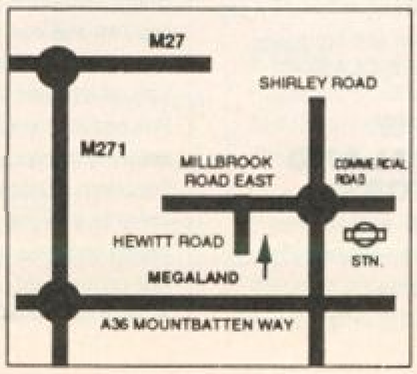

THE GAMES YOU HAVE TO HAVE...

SOMETIMES YOU KNOW YOU'VE GOT TO FACE UP TO THE TRUTH. YOUR SOFTWARE COLLECTION IS GETTING YO DOWN, YOUR DOG'S SICK, YOUR FRIENDS ARE CONVINCED IT WAS YOU THAT LOST THE WINNING POOLS COUPON, YOUR MOTHER HAS DECIDED YOU NEED TO CHANGE YOUR IMAGE, AND YOUR GIRLFRIEND (OR BOYFRIEND) HAS JUST BEEN EATEN BY A ROTTWEILER...THERE'S ONLY ONE THING FOR IT...GO OUT AND GET A NEW GAME. AND TO MAKE SURE YOU REALLY SEE THE BRIGHT SIDE, HERE'S A LIST OF GAMES YOU'VE JUST GOT TO ADD TO YOUR COLLECTION.

ARCADE STYLE

Including coin-op conversions. Games with a high fun factor and plenty of addictive action feature in this category.

ARKANOID

Imagine ● Spectrum £7.95cs ● C64 £8.95cs £12.95dk ● Amstrad £8.95cs £14.95dk ● Atari XL/XE £8.95cs ● Atari ST £14.95dk ● MSX £8.95cs ● IBM PC £19.95dk

Conversion from *Arkanoid* the coin-op, in its turn the best version of the classic *Breakout*. Simple in concept: the player controls a bat at the base of the screen, whizzing it left and right. The object is to keep a small ball in play, bouncing it off the bat to destroy formations of bricks in the top half of the screen. Eliminate all the bricks and move on to the next of 33 screens. Clever extra features contribute to the addictiveness. As a faithful coin-op conversion, *Arkanoid* comes out top, but for a different slant on the same theme and some nifty music, try ASL's *Impact*, which also builds up the difficulty levels more gradually.

★ ACE CLASSIC

BOUNDER

Gremlin Graphics ● Spectrum £7.95cs ● C64 £9.95cs £12.95dk ● Amstrad £8.95cs £13.95dk

A great arcade bounce-em-up, and very addictive too. You guide a ball as it bounces from one platform to another, high above the vertically scrolling landscape. Land on marked squares and you can stay aloft longer or gain a mystery bonus. Fill in a gap or hit one of the game's many nasties, however, and you'll lose a life. Bonus bouncing sections at the end of each level help vary the pace, and those tough gaps really keep you coming back for more. Bright, witty graphics, great music – and it's so playable.

★ ACE CLASSIC

BUBBLE BOBBLE

Firebird ● Spectrum £7.95cs ● C64 £8.95cs £12.95dk ● Amstrad £8.95cs £14.95dk ● Atari ST £19.95dk

Playability is the essence of this two-player coin-op conversion. You and a friend play bubble-blowing dinosaurs, travelling through 100 maze-and-platform screens, fighting off the 'bullies' by encapsulating them in your bubbles to turn them into juicy fruit. More firepower and various bonuses await as you reach the more difficult later screens. Enormously good fun, if a little on the cutesy side. Can also be played as one player against the computer.

★ ACE RATED 958

CONQUEROR

Superior ● Archimedes £24.95dk (Amiga and ST versions under development)

Drive around in your very own tank! Blast the enemy in close combat and plan your strategy for the campaign. This is a tricky game to get to grips with, but if you persevere you'll find you soon become mesmerised by the thing. If you ain't got a 1Mb Archie though – forget it!

★ ACE RATED 931

ELIMINATOR

Hewson ● Spectrum £7.99cs £12.99dk ● C64 £9.99cs £14.99dk ● Amstrad £9.99cs £14.99dk ● Atari ST £19.99dk ● Amiga £19.99dk

Graphically wonderful roadway blast-em-up by John Phillips, which will twist your joystick inside-out. It'll even have you driving on the ceiling. Though it's tough to get to grips with at first, the addiction level's so great you'll keep coming back for more.

★ ACE RATED 904

EXOLON

Hewson ● Spectrum £7.95cs ● C64 £8.95cs £12.95dk ● Amstrad £8.95cs £14.95dk

Graphically superb horizontally scrolling shoot-em-up in which you run, duck and jump your way along a planet's surface blasting away at alien defences. A gun and a missile launcher are used to blast the foes, but if things are still too tough then you can grab an exoskeleton for extra protection and fire power.

★ ACE CLASSIC

NEW ZEALAND STORY

Ocean ● Spectrum £8.95cs, C64 £9.95cs, Amstrad £9.95cs, ST £19.99, Amiga £24.99

Although pipped at the post in a head to head with Rainbow Islands, New Zealand Story is not a game to be ruled out. It is immense fun to play, provides lots of varied action across many levels. Definitely worth checking out.

★ ACE RATED 875

OIDS

Mirrorsoft ● Atari ST £19.99dk

A magnificent *Thrust*-ish blast. The Oids are relying on you to save them, but the Biocretes aren't going to let them go without throwing missiles, rockets and a number of other weapons at you. Included with the program is an edit facility that allows you to design your own planetoids – great stuff!

★ ACE RATED 969

PITSTOP 2

Epyx/US Gold ● Available only on Epyx Epics compilation ● C64 £9.95cs £14.95dk ● IBM PC £29.95dk (in compilation with *Winter Games* and *Summer Games 2*)

Thrilling racing game where the screen is split into two and you can race the computer or a friend. Lots of different Grand Prix circuits, tyre blowouts and of course the all-important pitstops guarantee to give you hand cramp and your brain a real racing treat.

★ ACE CLASSIC

POWERDROME

Electronic Arts ● Atari ST £24.95dk

This superb arcade-style futuristic driving simulation will have you enthralled for months to come. It may not be ter bly easy to get straight into but it's well worth persevering with. You'll b playing this for months.

★ ACE RATED 925

PURPLE SATURN DAY

Exxos ● Atari ST £24.95dk ● Amiga £24.95

A terrific mix of games that delivers punch both audio and visual. The co sistently good gameplay ensures you'll enjoy playing each sub-game time and again. It's a little tricky to get the hang of, but master it and you'll b pleased you persevered.

★ ACE RATED 912

RAINBOW ISLANDS

Firebird, Spectrum £9.95cs £14.95dk, C64 £9.99cs $14.99dk, Amstrad £9.99cs £14.99dk, ST £24.99, Amiga £24.99

The sequel to Bubble Bo ble is nothing short of fa tastic. The graphics and sound are superb, as is the gameplay.

One of the best (and cutest arcade conver-

sions of the year that should not be missed.
★ ACE RATED 934

RVF

Microstyle, ST £24.99, Amiga £29.99

RVF offers a near endless supply of fast paced bike action as you race your Honda RVF. Attention to detail is paid out all along the route with your rider giving the bike a push start after a crash. An excellent mix of arcade and simulation.
★ ACE RATED 915

SPIDERTRONIC

Ere International ● Atari ST £19.95dk

Guide your spider-like character around the game area, collecting coloured panels in the correct order. The built-in construction set means you'll be knocking out your own levels till the cows come home.
★ ACE RATED 903

SUMMER GAMES

Epyx/US Gold ● C64 £9.95 cs £14.95dk ● IBM PC £29.95dk

Epyx sporting simulations are of high quality but none have quite captured the playability and style of the original *Summer Games* and its immediate successor, *Summer Games 2*. One to six players can take part in high jump, gymnastics, springboard diving, clay pigeon shooting, swimming, pole vault – and others – with lovely large graphics and smooth animation throughout. Control of your athlete can be complex so practice is recommended.
★ ACE CLASSIC

SUPER SPRINT

Electric Dreams ● C64 £9.99cs £14.99dk Amstrad £9.99cs Spectrum £9.99cs ● Atari ST £19.99dk

One of the better coin-op conversions currently available. With up to three players all competing at once, the action is fast and furious and it will take a finely-tuned car to complete some of the more tortuous circuits that appear later in the game.
★ ACE RATED 907

THRUST

Firebird ● Spectrum £1.99cs ● C64 £1.99cs ● Amstrad £1.99cs

Terrifyingly sensitive controls and a large helping of real-life physics make this budget title an absolute must. Flying down through the caverns of an enemy-held planet, you have to pick up fuel and destroy hostile gun turrets without crashing into the tunnel walls. Tough enough as it is, but then you've got to make the return journey with a heavy load slung under your craft. Very mean, very addictive.
★ ACE CLASSIC

URIDIUM

Hewson ● Spectrum £8.95cs ● C64 £9.95cs £12.95dk ● BBC £9.95cs £14.95dk

The piece de resistance of scrolling shoot-em-ups: blast the dreadnought and attacking ships while dodging around any large structures. Great metallic-looking dreadnoughts and the smoothest scrolling you'll ever see put this head and shoulders above the opposition. A game not to be missed, especially now that C64 versions come packaged with the excellent *Paradroid*.
ACE CLASSIC

ZARCH / VIRUS

Superior Software ● Archimedes £19.95dk ● Firebird (16 and 8-bit versions) Amiga £19.95dk ● Atari ST £19.95dk ● Some 8-bit versions under development

A solid three dimensional shoot-em-up with such graphic perfection and timelessly addictive gameplay that it became an instant classic. Now the 16-bit versions have arrived and they're just as good as the 32-bit versions.
★ ACE RATED 981

ADVENTURES

After a brief surge of RPG_related popularity, the traditional text-entry adventure is rapidly disappearing. But for those of you who savour the powers of the imagination, the verbal twist, and the thrill of encountering other characters, this game genre still has much to recommend it. Here are some of the all-time great computer fantasies...

BEYOND ZORK

Infocom/Activision ● C64 £19.99dk ● PC £24.99dk ● Amiga £24.99dk ● Atari ST £24.99dk

Infocom's attempt to muscle in on the role-playing market is a great success. Locate the fabulous Coconut of Quendor in a game that combines the wit and ingenuity of one of the world's most original software companies with state-of-the-art parsing and gameplay. Text-only, but with an on-screen mapping facility.
★ ACE RATED 902

CORRUPTION

Rainbird ● Atari ST £24.95dk ● Amiga £24.95dk ● PC £24.95dk ● Spectrum £15.95dk ● C64 £17.95dk ● Amstrad 6128 £19.95dk

This tale of insider dealings, infidelity and crooked business deals is unlikely to appeal to adventurers who prefer to wander through vast dungeon networks seeking treasure. But for those who are fed up with traditional adventuring, it's like a breath of fresh air. Superb graphics, great atmosphere and a nail-biting plot makes this a terrific game that grips from the start.
★ ACE RATED 920

FISH

Magnetic Scrolls ● PC £24.99dk Amiga £24.99dk

More gameplay than *Corruption*, better game design than *Jinxter*, and not as quirky as *The Pawn*. This is definitely MS's best release since *Guild Of Thieves*. Good stuff indeed.
★ ACE RATED

GUILD OF THIEVES

Rainbird ● C64 £19.95dk ● Spectrum £15.95dk ● Amstrad 6128 £19.95dk ● Amiga £24.95dk ● Atari ST £24.95dk ● PC £24.95dk

One of Britain's newer adventure software houses – Magnetic Scrolls – managed to produce a traditional treasure hunt with superb graphics and some very tricky puzzles. Powerful parser helps to create a convincing game world with humour and imagination.
★ ACE CLASSIC

INGRID'S BACK

Level 9 ● Atari ST £19.95dk

A great follow-up to *Gnome Ranger*. Level 9 have really got to grips with the use of characters in their games and how to program them very effectively.
★ ACE RATED 920

JEWELS OF DARKNESS

Rainbird ● C64 £14.95cs ● Spectrum 128 £14.95cs ● Amstrad £14.95cs £19.95dk ● PC £19.95dk ● Amiga £19.95dk ● Atari ST £19.95dk

Level 9 have put together three of their classic releases, *Colossal Adventure, Dungeon Adventure* and *Adventure Quest* in one bundle. The games have been updated with graphics and larger vocabularies and are as close to the original spirit of adventuring as you're likely to find.
★ ACE CLASSIC

LURKING HORROR

Infocom/Mediagenic ● C64 £19.99dk ● ST £24.99 I Amiga £24.99 ● PC £24.99

Infocom's tribute to H.P. Lovecraft and the horror-fantasy genre sends you into a cold sweat as you discover something very nasty lurking beneath your college laboratory. Superb text-only game that defies you to play it after dark...
★ ACE CLASSIC

TIME AND MAGIK

Mandarin ● Spectrum £14.95cs £14.95dk ● C64 £14.95cs £14.95dk ● Amstrad £14.95cs £14.95dk ● Atari ST £19.99dk ● Amiga £19.99dk ● PC £19.99dk

This compilation of the Level 9 games, *Lords Of Time, Red Moon* and *The Price Of Magik* have been re-vamped with better parsing, bigger vocabularies and pictures added. Superb value if you don't already own them.
★ ACE RATED 919

ZORK ZERO

Infocom Versions due out about now. Watch this space for price info. Highly enjoyable with a variety of challenges that make for instant addiction. A bit more character interaction would have made this a real humdinger, but even so it remains one of the best games of the year so far.
★ ACE RATED

PUZZLES

If you're after a game that will provide you with a real challenge, without necessarily requiring large doses of strategic thinking, then it's a puzzle game you want.

BONECRUNCHER

Superior Software ● C64 £9.95cs11.95dk ● Amiga £14.95

At first sight this recent release may appear to be nothing more than a boulderdash rip-off. However there are a number of innovative gameplay features which give Bonecruncher a feel all of its own. Highly recommended for those who prefer to solve problems rather than shoot them.
★ ACE RATED 948 – AMIGA

BOULDERDASH

Prism Leisure Corporation ● Spectrum £2.99cs ● C64 £2.99cs ● Amstrad £2.99cs

A game that has everything – instant addiction, long-term challenge, frenetic excitement as the clock ticks down and extremely tricky puzzles. You must collect jewels hidden in caverns, digging away earth and boulders to get tat them. Boulders can drop and cause you serious damage, while the jewels are often hidden by seemingly impenetrable walls. Complex but great fun. Boulderdash is a classic you can't afford to miss in its budget incarnation.
★ ACE CLASSIC

DEFLEKTOR

Gremlin/Vortex ● C64 £9.99cs ● Spectrum £7.99cs ● ST £19.95dk

Optics are the order of the day here (not the spirit dispensers) as the player tries to connect a laser beam to a receiver and at the same time destroy a

number of cells that are on screen as well. You'll need to make full use of the mirrors, fibre-optic conduits and polarising and refracting blocks if you're to achieve your aim. Clear the first screen and you'll only have 59 more to do. Fascinating stuff that's horribly addictive.
★ ACE RATED 906 – ST

NEBULUS

Hewson ● C64 £9.99cs £14.99 dk● Atari ST £14.99 dk

Guide pogo to the top of eight towers using the spiral of platforms, lifts and ledges that form the route. It's a highly original game that strikes a fine balance between frustration and addiction, added to which is the rotary scroll, thus making it a good-looking, playable winner of a game.
★ ACE RATED 943 - C64

SENTINEL

Firebird ● Spectrum £9.95 cs ● C64 £9.95cs £14.95dk ● Amstrad £9.95cs £14.95 dk ● Atari ST £19.95dk ● Amiga £19.99dk

Bizarre and compelling strategy game played over the chequered surface of a planet dominated by the Sentinel. Fundamentally you have to absorb energy while trying to stop the Sentinel from absorbing yours. A clean brain and fast trigger finger are both necessary in this very original and large - 10,000 possible landscapes - game.
★ ACE RATED 963 - AMIGA

SKULL DIGGERY

Nexus● Atari ST £19.95

Boulderdash clone that completely outdoes the original on this particular machine. Again (see Boulderdash above) you're digging for diamonds in caverns over a hundred different screens - with a time limit for each screen. Skulldiggery scores on playability (easier screens to begin with and a choice of starting point) and its entertaining two-player option.
★ ACE RATED 919 - ST

SPORE

Bulldog ● C64 £1.99cs ● Amstrad £1.99cs ● Spectrum £1.99cs

The winning combination of strategy, frenzied blasting and great graphics make Spore a worthy full-priced release - what a bargain then to be able to pick it up for £1.99!
★ ACE RATED 919 - C64

TETRIS

Mirrorsoft ● Spectrum £8.99 cs ● C64 £8.99cs £12.99dk ● Amstrad £8.99cs £12.99 dk ● Atari ST £19.95dk ● Amiga £19.99dk ● IBM PC £19.99dk

A fascinating geometrical oddity, this Russian puzzler turns the obscure mathematical topic of packing into a cult game. One at a time, shapes fall downwards into a rectangular playing area. Left to their own devices they'll pile up until they reach the top of the screen; your task is to guide them down and pack them tightly so that doesn't happen. Different versions have proved to be rather variable in their arcade aspects, but the brilliantly simple idea behind them means they're well worth a look whatever your machine.
★ ACE RATED 959 - C64

THINK!

Firebird ● C64 £1.99cs ● Amstrad £1.99cs ● Spectrum £1.99cs

Originally released by Ariolasoft at full price, but now available for a fraction of that from Firebird. It's a horribly addictive game played on a 6x6 grid - either one or two player - in which you attempt to connect four counters, horizontally, vertically or diagonally.
★ ACE CLASSIC

XOR

Logotron ● BBC £9.95cs £12.85dk ● Amstrad £9.95cs £14.95dk● Spectrum £7.95cs

Extremely tricky maze game involving the player controlling two shields, and collecting masks through 15 mazes, which increase in complexity as you progress. Also in later stages, fish and chickens lie in wait, often blocking the masks and just waiting to fall on you and bring your quest to a premature end. Later still, things hot up as bombs, transporters and dolls conspire against you. Smooth scrolling, simple graphics, this one requires planning to complete successfully.

SPECIALS

Original works that are simply unclassifiable feature in this section.

ATF

Digital Integration ● C64 £8.95cs £12.95dk ● Amstrad £8.95cs £12.95dk● Spectrum £8.95cs £13.95dk

Excellent combat/flight simulator that's a bit of a change for Digital Integration, the simulation specialist. The emphasis is on solid action, the result being a sure-fire hit.
★ ACE RATED 956 - SPECTRUM

DARK SIDE

Incentive ● C64 £9.95cs £14.95dk ● Amstrad £9.95cs £14.95dk● Spectrum £9.95cs £14.95dk

The second game using the Freescape programming system, which sets more of an arcade challenge. The 3-D graphics are again superb as are the tasks and puzzles.
★ ACE RATED 915 - AMSTRAD

ELITE

Firebird ● C64 £14.95cs £17.95dk ● Amstrad £12.95cs £14.95dk● Spectrum £14.95cs ● BBC £13.95cs £14.95dk (available from Superior software)

Still the best space trading game, Elite set a standard for other companies to follow. One of the first space games to use vector graphics, it's a shooting and trading effort set across several galaxies, with plenty of variety to the game play. You can trade legal goods in (relatively) safe systems, or run the gauntlet of pirates in the galaxies' danger spots with your hold full of contraband. Either way there's a nice line in zero-G dogfighting, and as big a task as you'll find anywhere.
★ ACE CLASSIC

INCREDIBLE SHRINKING SPHERE

Electric Dreams ● C64 £8.99cs £14.99dk ● Amstrad £9.99cs £14.99dk ● Spectrum £9.99cs £14.99dk ● Atari ST £19.99dk ● Amiga £24.99dk

A manic maze world where mass, size and inertia combine to provide wicked gameplay. Tricky puzzles and endless nasty obstacles will have you rolling around in delight.
★ ACE RATED 923 - C64

M1 TANK PLATOON

Microprose ● PC £39.99dk

This is a welcome break from flight-sims that boasts enough detail to keep even the most compulsive nitpicker happy, and at the same time has a breadth of challenge and combat scenarios that should satisfy the most ardent gamester. A winner.
★ ACE RATED 926

MAGNETRON-

Firebird ● C64 £8.95cs £12.95dk ● Spectrum £8.95cs £12.95dk

Puzzles and action Steve Turner style. Save the world by dismantling eight satellites. Steal parts from enemy droids to upgrade your own droid and hopefully make your job a little easier. The ideal game for Quazatron fans looking for a similar, new challenge.
★ ACE RATED 904 - SPECTRUM

QUEDEX

Thalamus ● C64 £9.95cs £14.95dk

In this impressively challenging game you must steer a metallic ball through ten different screens of mazes, bonuses and obstacles, all within a set time limit. This simple game concept has a host of added features to make it particularly pleasing: you can carry over unused time to the next screen, for example, and tackle the different screens or 'planes' in any order you wish. Excellent graphics and utterly absorbing play.
★ ACE RATED 934 - C64

SPINDIZZY

Electric Dreams ● C64 £9.95cs £14.95dk ● Spectrum £9.95cs ● Amstrad £9.95cs £14.95 Disk

Tremendous stuff; steer your spinning top over tough obstacles and collect jewels, against a fiendish time limit. The game landscape is a vast system of catwalks, ramps, towers and trampolines surrounded by lethal drops - and NO safety rails. Floor switches activate lifts and bridge traps, but tripping them in the right order can be harder than it looks. A few bad guys and a lot of nice touches, but the explorations the thing.
★ ACE CLASSIC

STARGLIDER II

Rainbird ● Atari ST £24.95dk ● Amiga £24.99dk

One of the finest examples of a game using vector graphics to their full advantage, gets the solid 3D treatment and comes out looking every bit a winner. You've got a large task to complete and there's plenty of Egron's to destroy, making this combination of blasting and exploration that stands head above the competition.
★ ACE RATED 927 - ST

WARNING!

Games can damage your health. ACE recently handed a copy of *Ultima V* (see the RPG section on the next page) to a member of a leading City institution who 'never played games.' The gentleman, unfortunately, had a PC at home.

When we attempted to contact the man the next day, we were told he was 'off sick'. He remained on the sick list for three weeks. At the end of the three weeks, ACE received a complete guide to...*Ultima V*...

STAR TREK V

Mindscape ● PC £34.99dk ● MAC £34.99dk

This is easily the best interpretation of Star Trek yet. The gameplay provides absorbing and challenging hours of fun. A must for Trekkies and an entertaining space strategy /simulator for everyone else.
★ ACE RATED 930

TAU CETI/ ACADEMY

CRL ● C64 £9.95cs £14.95dk ● Amstrad £9.95cs £14.95dk ● Spectrum £9.95cs ● Atari ST £19.99dk ● Amiga £19.95

Flight simulator/shoot 'em up and its sequel which are both incredibly smooth and well put together. The attention to detail is impeccable as you set off on hair-raising missions as a space cadet. In Academy you get to design your own space skimmer craft as well.
★ ACE CLASSIC

TOTAL ECLIPSE

Incentive ● C64 £9.95cs £12.95dk ● Amstrad £9.95cs £12.95dk ● Spectrum £9.95cs

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The third game using the Freescape system is a bit of a departure from the first two, but it's still an incredible game. In total eclipse you're battling against time back in the 1930's trying to prevent the moon exploding. For arcade adventurers who love puzzles, the Freescape system is a godsend.
★ ACE RATED 907 - AMSTRAD

WIZBALL

OCEAN ● C64 £8.95cs £14.95dk ● Amstrad £8.95cs $12.95dk ● Spectrum £8.95cs £14.95dk

Become Wizball and conquer the 'colour creatures' which are intent on eliminating the spectrum and rendering the landscape grey and drab. One of the most playable games around, despite the simple scenario.
ACE Classic

THE BARD'S TALE II

Electronic Arts, C64 £16.95, Amiga £24.95dk

The highly successful predecessor to Bards Tale III. BT II has the advantage of being slightly easier to advance. THe Amiga version features some very nice sampled monk chants when you enter a temple and excellently coloured graphics. And of course, you can update your favourite characters, their attributes and equipment for use in BT III.
★ ACE RATED 920

THE BARD'S TALE III

Electronic Arts ● C64 £14.95dk

The latest *Bard's Tale* game offers a number of refinements over its predecessors (all of which are still well worth taking a good look at). First, the graphics are better animated. Second, there are ranged combat routines which take careful account of the distance between you and your opponents. Finally, the game's large and represents excellent value for money.
★ ACE RATED 920

BATTLETECH

Infocom, PC £29.95, ST

Battletech features some incredible cartoon sequences, arcade style action, role play and strategy. In short a complete, full game. A brilliant RPG purchase even though it missed out on an Ace rating.
★ ACE RATED 801

DUNGEON MASTER

Electronic Arts ● C64 £14.95dk

Quoted as being a "milestone in Advanced Computer Entertainment", *Dungeon Master* offers 14 levels, loads of spells, atmospheric graphics and sound. All going to make *Dungeon Master* one of the best roleplaying adventures to have appeared on any machine.
★ ACE RATED 949

POOL OF RADIANCE

US GOLD /SSI
● C64 £14.99dk

SSI were very brave to attempt to capture the complex concept of the AD&D system on a computer, but they managed superbly. An RPG-influenced game that will appeal to not only AD&D fans but to anyone looking for an enthralling game that will keep them playing for months.
★ ACE RATED 921

ULTIMA V

OriginSystems/Microprose ● C64 £24.95dk ● PC £29.95 ● ST/Amiga to be announced

BRAIN GAMES

Fed up with mindless blasting? Want a game that offers you an opponent who's worthy of your skills? Then this is your section...

CHESS MASTER 2000

Electronic Arts ● C64 £9.95cs £14.95dk ● Amiga £24.95dk ● Atari ST £24.95dk ● IBM PC £24.95dk

Strongest chess game on the Amiga, with excellent graphics, 2D or 3D viewpoint, 12 levels of difficulty and all the playing options you could wish for. Plus some fairly nifty speech synthesis.
★ ACE CLASSIC

COLOSSUS CHESS 4

CDS ● C64 £9.95cs £14.95dk ● Amstrad £9.95cs £14.95dk● Spectrum £9.95

Best bet for 8-bit machine owners, with a choice of 2D or 3D view, umpteen levels of difficulty, and a myriad options which enable you to play, watch, work out chess problems, etc against a fine computer opponent.
★ ACE CLASSIC

COLOSSUS MAH JONG

CDS ● C64 £9.99cs £14.99dk ● Amstrad £9.99cs £14.99dk

Rummy-like oriental game of stratagy and chance. A tutor program and a short manual make this an easy to use and highly entertaining piece of software for veterans and novices alike..
★ ACE RATED 937 - C64

INFOGRAMES' BRIDGE

Infogrames ● Amstrad £12.95cs £15.95dk ● MSX £12.95

Graphically the best of all contract bridge simulations, with large playing cards depicted against a suitably green baize background. Plays a good game (for a computer, which after all is a bit short in the imangination and flair department), and features a wide range of options and bidding conventions which you can toggle of according to your style.
★ ACE CLASSIC

POWERPLAY

Arcana ● C64 £8.95cs £14.95dk ● Amstrad £8.95cs £14.95dk ● Amiga £19.95dk ● Atari ST £19.95dk

If you want to try out your general knowledge, we reckon you'd be better off with this original and challenging combination of strategy game and quiz than with the admittedly monster selling Trivial Pursuits. Powerplay is graphically very pretty in its setting on Mount Olympus, home of the Gods.
★ ACE RATED 935 - Amiga

SCRABBLE

Leisure Genius ● C64 £12.95cs £14.95dk ● Amstrad £9.95cs £14.95 ● IBM PC £24.95dk

The hugely popular word game translated very successfully onto the micro. Fast, excellent display, and a suprisingly large vocabulary (even if it does include some strange looking words on some occasions). Good enough to give even strong human opponents a tough game at the higher levels.
★ ACE CLASSIC

WAR GAMES

Fancy yourself as a master of grand strategy, marshalling hordes of troops and sending them of to do battle on your behalf? Look no further than the ACE war games section...

ARNHEM

CCS, Spectrum £8.95cs, Amstrad £9.95cs, C64 £9.95cs

One of the oldest quality wargames featured in the section, Arnham was easioly the best in the field. It has all the expected atmosphere, five seperate scenarios and one of the toughest computer opponents you could ever wa't to meet. A thoroughly absobing wargame which can be classed as one of the old masters.
★ ACE RATED 910

CONFLICT EUROPE

Mirrorsoft, ST 24.99, Amiga £24.99, PC TBA

The 16 bit progression of Theatre Europe. Lots of extra graphical and sound effects. The computer controlled intelligence was marginally sophisticated but still enough to give a challenging game. The correct balance between strategy and exitement throughout. Great for beginners and intermediate players.
★ ACE RATED 882

THEATRE EUROPE

PSS, Spectrum £9.95cs, C64 £0.95cs £14.95dk, Amstrad £9.95cs £14.95dk

The perfect game for 8 bit owners who go green with envy when they look at Conflict Europe. Theatre Europe is the forerunner to the excellent 16 bit game. The graphics and overall play are not as sophisticated, but on the whole it still is one heck of a game.
★ ACE RATED 915

UMS

Rainbird, ST £24.95, PC £24.95, Macintosh £34.95, Amiga £24.95

Probably the greatest war game to date. UMS' uniqe 3D systems enables the creation of almost any battle in history. As well as a very sophisticated computer opponents yet. On top of this are add on scenarios and a very neat contruction kit to keep you going for even longer. An essential purchase
★ ACE RATED 907

FLIGHT SIMULATIONS

How about flying the latest US Stealth Fighter on a mission over Siberia? Or perhaps a quick flight over Hawaii would be more relaxing? Computer flight simulations can fulfill any flight of fancy

BATTLEHAWKS 1942

Lucasfilm Games/US Gold ● ST £24.95dk ● Amiga £24.95dk ● PC £24.95dk

A WWII naval air combat simulator covering the four most important battles of the 1942 Pacific war. For knuckle-whitening action this one has everything – the sense of 'being there' is tremdous. Thrilling and surprisngly addictive stuff.

★ ACE RATED 928

BOMBER

Activision ● Spectrum £14.99cs £19.99dk ● C64 £14.99cs £19.99dk ● Amstrad £14.99cs £19.99dk ● ST £24.99dk ● Amiga £24.99dk ● PC £34.99dk

Vector Grafix has spent a long time on this one – and it certainly shows. The game gets the balance just right between convincing simulation and entertaining game. Highly recommended.

★ ACE RATED 925

CHUCK YEAGER'S ADVANCED FLIGHT TRAINER

Electronic Arts ● Spectrum ● C64 ● CPC ● ST ● Amiga ● PC £24.95dk

Fly a multiude of aircraft from an early bi-plane to the Space Shuttle. It's entertainingly different from your standard flight sim and there's so much in this game that it will take many hours of instructive fun to experience and master all the available options.

★ ACE RATED 912

F-16 COMBAT PILOT

Digital Integration ● ST £24.95dk ● Amiga £24.95dk ● PC £24.95dk

This took nine person years to develop, and you can feel that quality of work when playing it – it's one of the most realistic flight sims on the market. If you are a connoisseur of flight simulators then this is an essential addition to your collection.

★ ACE RATED 970

FALCON

Spectrum Holobyte/Mirrorsoft ● ST £24.95dk ● Amiga £24.95dk ● PC £24.95dk ● MAC

If you really want the terror, exhilaration and sheer everything-happens-at-once confusion of combat flying, this game delivers. Make no mistake, this game is the real thing. An essential purchase for fast-jet fans.

★ ACE RATED 945

FLIGHT SIMUALTOR II

Sublogic ● C64 £39.95dk ● ST £49.95dk ● Amiga £49.95dk ● PC £49.95dk ● MAC £49.95dk

The flight sim that put the genre on to the map. Thoroughly realistic flight sim of a domestic Cessna plane, which is even used by flight schools to train would be pilots. Can be enhanced by a variety of Scenery Disks.

★ ACE CLASSIC

INTERCEPTOR

Electronic Arts ● Amiga £24.95dk

A low level flight sim with a h level of fun.Purists may dispute the label 'simulator' – it certainly wouldn't train you to fly a real life Hornet – but this program combines realism and gameplay far too well for that to matter. If you want seat-of-the-pants air combat action, miraculous graphics and NO six month training period, look no further!

★ ACE RATED 934

RACING SIMULATIONS

In the first of an occasional series, ACE takes a special look at a particular game genre and the games that are worth a look, this month it's the turn of the venerable racing-simulation, as originally mentioned in our Burning Rubber feature in Issue 26...

LOMBARD RAC RALLY

Mandarin ● ST ● Amiga ● PC

Race through many types of terrain, such as mountain or forest, and through many types of weather condition, such as fog or night. The game has a nice atmosphere, and though the variety of gameplay may be a little low, it's still a game you'd be playing for a good while.

FERRARI FORMULA ONE

Electronic Arts ● ST £24.99dk ● Amiga £24.99dk ● PC £24.99dk

A bit old this one, but still a game that was way ahead of its time to start with. Take the wheel of a Formula One Ferrari racer on some of the most famous racecourses in the world. A true thoroughbred.

R.V.F.

Microstyle ● ST £24.99dk ● Amiga £24.99dk

The champion in the Best Sprite Based Racing Game stakes, and a superb simulation, this one puts you into the world of performance bike racing on none other than the Honda RVF750. Brilliant graphics, brilliant sound, brilliant game.

STUNT CAR RACER

Microstyle ● Spectrum £9.99cs £14.99dk ● C64 £9.99cs £14.99dk ● ST £24.99dk ● Amiga £24.99dk ● PC £24.99dk

This places itself in the annals of computer history as being one of the most amazing spectacles to watch, let alone play. The game is first-person perspective, with the outside world made up of really fast smooth filled vectors, and the impression of realism is unbelievable. An amazing experience, and a clear winner. Where can things go from here?

SUPER HANG ON

Electric Dreams ● Spectrum £9.99cs ● C64 £9.99cs £14.99dk ● Amstrad £9.99cs £14.99dk ● ST £24.99dk ● Amiga £24.99dk

Not so much a simulation as a perfect arcade conversion of a brilliant bike racing Sega coin-op. Great game, excellent conversion.

THE DUEL - TEST DRIVE II

Accolade ● C64 ● ST ● Amiga ● PC ● MAC

Accolade tried to right all the *Test Drive* wrongs with this sequel, and to an extent they succeeded. There's nothing serious about the game. It's just a lot of fun. It doesn't claim to be technically or visually accurate, but why should it?

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LOVE AND PASSION IN THE MODERN KITCHEN (DIGITAL PASSION II) — THE PLOT OF THE SOUND TRACK OF THE MOVIE OF THE NEWSPAPER SERIALISATION OF THE BOOK OF THE ORIGINAL PINK DRAMA IN TWO PARTS (OF WHICH THIS IS THE SECOND AND FINAL, ABSOLUTELY CONCLUSIVE, NO-HOLDS BARRED, TEAR JERKING, ACE 900+ RATED BIT)

by Bettina Throckmorton

First a short biographical note: Bettina Throckmorton began her long and distinguished career as one of Britain's top writers working as a humble copy typist for My Woman (a pioneering weekly for the modern woman and her family). It was not long before Bettina had proved her worth and was elevated to the position of fiction editor.

During her time with My Woman she was fortunate enough to have several pieces of her own fiction published in the same magazine during her stay there. Over the following years her superlative works were seen in a number of other magazines, all of which she also served as an authoritative and experienced fiction editor.

Such is the respect her work has generated in this country, that emminent critic, Jack Greeble of the Pig Breeder's Chronicle has said of her: 'Bluidy 'ell, 'oo the 'eck wrote this *@#!'. All it remains for us to say, is that we are very proud to be the first Computer publication to feature Ms.Throckmorton's fiction (the first piece in her proposed Post Cyberpunk series), and are very sad that it is not possible for us to offer her a position as Fiction Editor on ACE. Sit back, relax, and enjoy...'

THE STORY SO FAR

Vile fatty Norbert, was quite happily vapourising unsuspecting aliens on his Nintega when his disk drive suddenly died. On investigating the 'accident' he contracted the dreaded finger virus, which he duly passed on to his mummy. We left the tale with mother about to fall desperately in love with an electric toaster. Confused? You soon will be, when you've read the final exciting installment of DIGITAL PASSION!

Norbert looked on astonished as his formerly drippy mother began to advance lasciviously on the toaster. 'Oh well,' he thought, 'since she's in a domestic mood, I'd better make the most of it...'

"Mom," he bawled, "I'm 'ungry, where's my tea then?"

"Shut up you little creep!," she snapped, turning on him. Her eyes had turned a deep red, and her face was beginning to look as if it had been rendered on a CGA PC (yes, it really was that disgusting!).

"Go and get if for me... I want it now...," she croaked, her voice sounding more and more like a naff speech synthesiser.

"G..G..Get what mom?," asked Norbet, his belly quivering visibly.

"IT! IT!", she screamed, "The Nuntoga..."

"Oh," he smiled, a little nervously, "you mean the Nint..."

"Just GET IT...!"

Norbert ran up the stairs as fast as his fat little legs could carry him, just noticing his mother making overtures to the microwave as he reached the landing.

When Norbert finally reappeared with the damaged Nintega, a tremendous transformation had overcome the woman who had once been his mother. She had regressed to... horror of horrors...ultra-low resolution in only four colours. As she animated across the kitchen towards him (at a feeble 18 frames per second) he was almost violently sick. She was actually causing attribute clash all over the place.

Wasting not even a nanosecond, Norbert reached for his trusty Nintega light Phaser, but, before he had a chance to aim, his menacing mother had snatched the console from his sweaty hands and began kissing it passionately while making appalling sampled slurping sounds.

Poor Norbert was about to retreat when there was an almighty flash and a burst of flame. When the smoke cleared the kitchen was full of all the sprites Norb had ever put an end to, and all of them had been expanded to twenty times their original size. Norbert, however, was too intent on the scene in the middle of the kitchen floor to worry about anything else.

His mother was standing face to face with an absolutely enormous sprite. Her eye's were agog, for the beast before her had the largest pixels she had ever seen and was currently flexing them provocatively. Norb was just wondering who this creature was when a tiny voice from one of the other sprites piped up (actually it was Henry aka Smorgon). "I don't believe it! By Clive Sinclair, if it isn't N'Gar Thrombobo". This seemingly innocuous statement was enough to spark of a chorus of cries like, 'We thought you were dead,' and 'N'Gar, our hero,' or 'Hurrah! Hurrah for good old N'Gar!' "Freinds, Sprites, Countrymen, lend me your megacycles," boomed the dreaded N'Gar. "Yes, it's true, I was dead, gone for ever, consigned for all eternity to the darkest corner of a corrupted 3.5 inch diskette. But now, thanks to the love of this fair lady, N'Gar Thrombobo has risen to once again become the scourge of games players everywhere..." So saying, he scooped Norbert's quivering mother into his arms and headed off, through crowds of cheering sprites, into a perfect colour-graduated sunset...

THE ABSOLUTE END!

..sniff.. sniff.. I don't think I can take any more, that's so beautiful. That's all for now, but look out for more pink fiction at a copy of ACE near you soon!

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A	T	R	L	S	E	A	T	A	I	H	A	R	C	O	R	T	R	C
L	R	O	G	A	M	X	V	S	T	E	Y	O	T	K	R	B	D	E
T	I	C	V	C	E	A	S	A	C	E	E	W	R	C	E	A	A	R
Y	V	S	A	H	U	G	M	I	H	X	R	D	U	I	C	L	Y	H
O	I	P	R	E	G	R	A	N	D	S	L	A	M	K	T	L	U	I
E	A	O	S	E	A	E	G	T	R	T	S	M	A	S	H	O	T	S
Q	P	I	N	R	E	A	N	S	W	E	R	S	W	A	A	V	A	T
S	U	G	O	A	L	K	E	E	P	E	R	T	E	A	M	V	M	O
Q	Z	I	I	J	O	K	E	S	G	O	A	R	D	U	S	I	E	R
I	T	V	T	W	C	H	E	E	D	P	L	A	S	E	X	B	G	Y
Z	R	X	S	O	U	T	N	O	W	M	A	D	E	O	R	O	A	A
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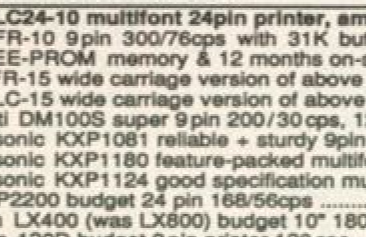

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THE ART OF ANIMATION

Duncan Evans has been playing around with Domark's *Fantavision* – and has been driven to investigate animation techniques in general. Here's what he found out...

Traditional cartoon animation technique has changed little since Walt Disney and his team of animators produced such classics as Snow White and Fantasia. It is the filming technology and animation tools and aids which have developed.

The basics of cartoon animation still revolve around key drawings and the steps in between. Usually the animator will draw an object in two key positions and then mark down how many in between positions are needed to achieve the desired result. An assistant then has the task of drawing the in between stages. The very first in between stage is called the breakdown point, and if significant is often drawn by the animator.

One of the important techniques of 'in betweening' is that those stages are often not spaced at regular intervals between the breakdown point and the key drawings. To achieve such effects as the slow in, so called because the action slows into a final position, there needs to be more 'in betweens' towards the end of the sequence. The converse of this is the slow out where more 'in betweens' are positioned at the start. Also it is quite rare for sequences to be split into thirds when only two 'in betweens' can be used because of filming restraints. This is much harder to draw, so invariably a slow in or slow out is used instead.

For rotating objects through three dimensions it is necessary for the assistant to plot the centres of the two key drawings, and then the centre of the breakdown position on a separate sheet of paper. All three sheets are then aligned, with the breakdown sheet being topmost whereupon the breakdown drawing can be completed. By superimposing sheets it is possible to trace objects moving through three dimensions and by rotating the sheets around arcs can be plotted with greater accuracy.

The making of a full animated sequence that is to be filmed and produced for television or the cinema naturally involves a good deal more stages than a Fantavision production, though users of such programs would benefit from following some of the stages.

The script is the first thing to produce, though with animation the dialogue is of far less importance than the visual action. With sampled speech being so memory expensive on computers, this is likely to be kept to a minimum. From the script a storyboard is produced, which portrays the action in a graphical form. Usually at this point the key dialogue and music elements are recorded so that the team of animators can synchronise the cartoon to it.

Once completed an editor assembles it into the film, and then breaks it down phonetically, marking on the film where certain sounds begin and end. Meanwhile the director is arranging for designers to produce their own interpretations of the characters in the feature, which when approved will be used as the reference models for the rest of the animation team. The process then advances to Leica reel viewing of the film, line tests, cleaning up the drawings by a special cleanup crew, and transference of drawings to acetate or gel for painting. By this time the backgrounds will have been drawn and painted, and after a final checking everything is passed to the cameramen for actual film shooting. After viewing the rushes, dubbing of sound effects, a final print is developed by merging the film and soundtrack. The finished product is now ready to roll.

COMPUTER ANIMATION

With traditional pen and paper animation being such a time consuming process, it was inevitable that computers would begin to play a progressively larger role as they became faster and more powerful.

Tron from Walt Disney was one such film that featured numerous examples of computer generated graphics and received acclaim accordingly. Receiving rather less public enthusiasm was the Genesis sequence from a 1982 film, Star Trek II:The Wrath of Khan, which was entirely computer created and animated. It was also the longest piece of totally computer generated images seen in a commercial film. That section, and the very best special effects in films such as Star Wars, Cocoon, E.T, Poltergeist and Enemy Mine, was produced by the organisation known as Industrial, Light and Magic, or ILM.

ILM uses the standard technique of creating objects from polygons, and describing them as three dimensional with geometric formula. The smaller the polygon the greater the realism, but some surfaces are very difficult to describe as polygons so those areas are texture mapped. Rather like Fantavision's method of using fill patterns, but on a vastly more complex scale,. Here textures such as leather, bark and sand are described as three dimensional patches in the computer and then fitted to the surface of the polygon by stretching and size manipulation. Once an object is fully described it can be manipulated at will. The Last Starfighter from Digital Productions featured polygon created starships and space stations, with each one consisting of around 600,000 polygons. Even so the texture of many of the ships was a uniform semi glossy metal. ILM has received delivery of a computer called the Pixar which is capable of processing 80,000,000 polygons, but unfortunately it won't do it quite quickly enough and there is as yet no practical method of storing the colossal amount of data that it entails. When these problems are solved though the degree of surface detail will approach that of 35mm motion picture film. All generated by computer.

● Duncan Evans

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Yes folks, it's back - the most tense, the most exciting, the most feared, and revered page in the magazine. The page that, without warning, can thrust unsuspecting folk to the height of fame. Yep, it's the Pink Page Compo Results.

THE BEAST HAS EATEN!

First off, an absolutely huge list of lucky people who were first to jump out of the editorial hat and declare themselves winners of the mammoth Psygnosis Beast Feast! compo.

The personoids mentioned below will all be receiving copies of Shadow of the Beast on the Amiga any day now, each complete with a flashy Roger Dean Beast T-Shirt.

Emyr Bodfel Jones, Llanrwst,Gwynedd; **S.C. Cox**, Exeter, Devonshire; **Mr.K.A. Siddiqui**, Chiswick, London; **Andrew Clarence**, Whitley Bay, Tyne & Wear; **Alexander Kells**, Watermeadow, Northhampton; **M.A. Bingham**, Bakersfield, Nottingham; **Nigel Hastie**, Whitley Bay, Tyne & Wear; **H.M. Brown**, Benfleet, Essex; **Mr.J.V. Patel**, Evington, Leicester; and **Jon Taylor**, Bovingdon, Herts.

Ten runners-up, who all win the absolutely amazing Roger Dean T-Shirt are:

Simon Whitehouse, Talke Pits, Stoke-on-Trent; **Mike Jones**, Hinkley, Leicestershire; **Ian Davenport**, Wimborne, Dorset; **Dan Gallagher**, Omagh, Co. Tyrone; **Mark Clavering**, Ashington, Northumberland; **Iain Lowson**, Peebles, The Borders; **Christian Roig**, Roshilde, Denmark; **Mr.Matthew Bridges**, Chelmsford, Essex; **Mark Clapham**, Pannal, Harrogate; **Philip Anthony Brown**, Gelding, Nottingham.

Those nice people at Psygnosis will be dispatching your goodies to you pronto...

THE SHINIEST LEATHER IN THE WEST!

Yeee haarrr! Remember tha' lil ol' Rainbow Arts Shiny, Shiny Leather Compo yer ol' Ace buddies ran in them thar perdy Pink Pages back in October? Why sure ya do. We had enough entries even to dry out Sue Ellen, and that sure as hell ain't easy. Those lucky critters mentioned below should be receivin' a pair of sassy Cowboy boots real soon now, and why? 'Cos they was the first out of the editorial ten-gallon hat, that's why.

Mr.M.A. Reed, Kenley, Surrey (he's gonna donate his boots to his perdy lil lady - ma'am ya got yerself a real cool hubby there); Mark Clapham, Harrogate, North Yorkshire;and Glen Durrant, Canvey Island, Essex.

Well, that's all for this month folks. But you be sure to toon in to next month's compo results page. Ya never know, it could be your lucky day. See y'all there.

THE PINK ?

We've got a bit ? hanging over the Pink Pages – and we reckon you can help us.

Traditionally on ACE the Pink Pages are put together during the last day or two of the month – and this is often reflected in the chaotic nature of the section! However, from now on we'll be slotting them into the full production cycle: and that means we can pack more into Pink than ever before.

However, we'd like to hear from Pinkers on the subject. Perhaps you've got some great ideas for the section that we ought to know about. Now's your chance to tell us.

Furthermore, we're prepared to open up access to the Pink Pages in a way not usually done on magazines. We've already printed many cartoons and short stories sent in by readers – perhaps you're a budding cartoonist or fiction writer who'd like to get into print. Now's your chance.

Althernatively, you may have a special interest you pursue and about which you have expert knowledge: flying perhaps (so you could sound off about flight simulators) or MIDI (so you could sound off about sound). Short articles in areas of special interest will often find a place on these pages.

You can also help by writing to us to let us know what you think of the current features in the Pinks: the games survey, the Stock Market (just starting this issue); the puzzles, the crossword (missing this month but back again next month); and so on. Every bit of information we get from you helps us to build a better magazine.

Don't forget that the Pinks were always intended to be YOUR pages...and also pages to have FUN with. So get in touch now with:
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THE PRIZE PUZZLE PAGE

SORRY!

Whoops, prize puzzle 19, printed in last months issue was subject to a slight hiccup. Unfortunately the sum did not reproduce on the page quite as it should of done.

For those of you who spent hours trying to figure it out and failing....sorry! And to make recompense here is the offending article once again, only this time with the sum in the correct format. The deadline for entries for puzzle 19 is now 7th December 1989.

PRIZE PUZZLE 19

Set by Archie Medes

Jamie was never much good at long multiplication.

'I blame these pocket calculators,' his father was heard to complain, 'Everyone gets lazy and relies on them too much. In my day we had to use brain power....'

'Alright Dad,' replied Jamie, 'Point made! But if you want to exercise **your** little grey cells here's a long multiplication for **you** to try!'

Jamie sketched the following skeleton multiplication sum on a piece of paper. Adding a few digits he handed it over.

```
        - - - 2
        - - 3 -
        _______
      - - 4 - -
    - - 5 - -
  - - 6 - -
- - 7 - -
_______________
- 8 - - - - - -
_______________
```

The next day at work Jamie's dad was all set to give up until a colleague came to the rescue with a short computer program. In the sum shown the dashes represent the positions of the missing digits.

Can you complete the sum?

PUZZLE 19 ENTRY FORM

NAME: .... Telephone Number: ....

ADDRESS ....

....

Closing date 7th December 1989 (revised deadline)

PUZZLE 20 ENTRY FORM

NAME: .... Telephone Number: ....

ADDRESS ....

....

Closing date 7th December 1989

PRIZE PUZZLE 20

Set by Archie Medes

If there is one thing that Henry cannot stand it's Christmas shopping. Over the preceding weeks he had done his best to put off the day on which he had to venture into town, fight his way through the crowds and try to find gifts suitable for all those on his list of recipients.

However, to help him in his task he had jotted down a list of items and their prices:

Cassette Player	£15.99
Cuddly teddy bear	£8.85
Gramaphone record	£5.99
This year's trendy game	£21.73
Bottle of gin	£9.47
Christmas hamper	£17.59
Shirt & matching tie set	£11.00

This list proved a great help as he was able to select all of his presents from this list (although he did not necessarily buy every item listed). His only complaint was the total bill which came to exactly one hundred pounds. For all his faults, Henry is very generous when it comes to giving presents to his friends and I already have it on good authority that I am down to receive a shirt and tie set!

Can you discover exactly which items were on Henry's present list?

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WIN A FERRARI!

This month Ace and Domark give you the chance to win the car of your dreams. We're giving away not one, but five (yes, count them) Ferrari F40s. Wha'd'ya mean you don't believe me? Oh... right... Ok then. They're actually Radio Controlled Ferraris (and believe me, they are lush).

The models come with a full-function controller with forward, reverse, left/right turn, and stop controls. There are two forward speeds and a turbo charger(which means this baby runs very, very quickly). Power comes from easily recharged ni-cad batteries, and for night driving there are automatic headlights.

So what is all this generosity in aid of then? Well, Domark is celebrating the launch of the latest title on the Tengen label, Hard Drivin'. Domark have already brought you a great driving game in the form of Tengen's APB, a quirky chase game fetauring Officer Bob, a hard working patrolman. Now they are about to release computer versions of the best driving simulation ever to hit the arcades.

The game has been heralded as the most realistic driving sim ever. You'll be stunned by the smooth solid 3D vector graphics, and superb handling of the car. There are three seperate challenges in Hard Drivin'. First there's the Speed Track where the challenge lies in beating the fastest time. To do this you must overtake slower cars while avoiding oncoming traffic. Once you've mastered that you can try the Stunt Track which features a draw bridge (which always seems to be open!) and a complete vertical loop!

If you manage to complete both courses, and that ain't easy, you can challenge the ghostly phantom photon in a test of nerve and co-ordination. Sound good to you? Sure sounds good to me... look out for this one over Christmas.

So, what do you have to do to win one of these 'ere right flash Ferraris. First, answer the questions below:

(i) Which company produced the original Hard Drivin' Coin-op?

(ii) What was the name of another recent driving game from Domark which featured a hard working police patrolman?

(iii) Which of the following feature is not to be found on the Radio-Controlled Ferrari F-40s?

(a)Two-speed forward running,

(b)In-car stereo,

(c)Working headlights.

Hold it, hold it, I'm not finished yet. Once you've done that take the following words and use them to construct a new phrase. You don't have to use all of the letters, but you can't use any that aren't given here. The senders of the five wittiest and most pertinent phrases (with all the questions right) will win the Ferraris.

DOMARK TENGEN HARD DRIVIN FERRARI

Send your answers on the form below to:

Yeah, sure I wanna Ferrari, ACE magazine, Priory Court, 30-32 Farringdon Lane, London. EC1R 3AU.

Don't forget to clearly state your name and address. Entries must reach us by 7th December 1989.

ACE FERRARI COMPETITION ENTRY FORM

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CDI UPDATE

STEVE COOKE KEEPS YOU CLUED UP ON DEVELOPMENTS IN THE CDI WORLD AND VISITS MIRRORSOFT TO SEE THE NEW CDI VERSION OF THE GUINNES BOOK OF RECORDS...

CD-I is rapidly taking up position to become the dominant entertainment medium of the near future. But don't just take our word for it – ask Pergamon Compact Solution who – as part of the same group as Mirrorsoft – are currently investing heavily in the new medium.

As Richard Heasman points out on this month's letters pages, the equipment that usually ends up in our homes does so for two reasons: standardisation and lots and lots of money, for advertising and marketing.

CD-I is already attracting lots and lots of money, because the people who are involved in its development realise that whoever gets it right will reap massive rewards. The digitisation of music (CD) and video (laser disk) means that in future computer games will for the first time share a common format with other media. Combine that with all the money to be made from converting old ideas on video and LP's into 'new' ideas (in marketing terms) on CD-I and you've got a good excuse for the big boys to get involved. And they only do so when they know that somehow they're going to get their money back.

ACE is about to publish a theme issue on digital entertainment, covering not only CD-I but also the newer and more important DVI. DVI stands for Digital Video Interactive and is based upon work done by RCA. Unlike CD-I, it allows you much greater computer control and higher quality computer generated graphics – both of which work together with the same superb video and sound resources that CD-I has.

Pergamon Compact Solution's new version of the Guinness Book of Records is a good example of CD-I in its early – but still very impressive – stages of development. It allows you to select any 'record' and then cue in visual and audio information where appropriate. What's more, Pergamon have designed an entirely new framework for the book that enhances the natural interactivity of the new medium.

This framework is loosely based on the Apple Hypercard system (the same that was used to program Cosmic Osmo) and it is this developing software 'hypertechnology' that is almost certain to drive the new CD-I and DVI games.

The reason for this is that the multi-media nature of these products demands a system that can handle and establish links between very different kinds of information, and 'hypermedia' fulfill this task very well.

At present, hypermedia are restricted to the Apple Mac and, to some extent, the PC. For this reason many early CD-I products are (with the exception of the Philips machine to be released next year – see ACE issue 24) likely to be limited to Apple and PC products. Activision, however, are developing a Hypercard-type application that should, with any luck, be available for the Amiga and possibly for the ST within a few months. This would have a dramatic effect on 16-bit gameplay and we'll be reporting on it in our Hypermedia theme issue in the very near future.

For that issue we've interviewed hyper-ware designers in Britain and the US, so don't miss it – it'll bring you not only up to date, but into the future as well!

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LOGOTRON LOVELIES

Here at the ACE office we were having a fairly humdrum, dull, grey afternoon when who should call but the delectable Jane Smith of Logotron (Yes indeedy, she of the infamous dancing belly), offering us no less than ten copies of *Starblaze*, worth a good £19.99 of anyone's money, and *Bad Company*, clocking in at even more (£24.99).

Oh joy, now life seemed worth living again - freebie copies of two of the latest and greatest shoot-em-ups to grace the RAM chips of STs and Amigas world wide.

Imagine a game with the playability of *R-Type* and the stupendous graphics of *Starglider II*, and you will have something approaching *Starblaze*. The resulting game is something that shoot-em-up fans have dreamed of for a long time. Here's your chance to be the first to experience the reality.

Uh oh... you've fallen into *Bad Company* (not an ACE reader, surely). In this game there are no good guys, just you, your sidekick, and wave after wave of 'orrible bug-eyed creepy-crawly thingies that deserve nothing better than to be turned into insect soup. This *Operation Thunderbolt* basher features a simultaneous two-player option, four complete planets of aliens to clear, superb 3D combat, and.. and.. and..

Seriously though folks, if yer wants to be one of the first to get yer mitts on these lovelies from Logotron, nows yer chance. All you have to do is (he says in customary Pink Pages fashion)... answer the following eezy peezy questions.

1) What was the name of the addictive maze game which was the first to appear from Logotron (and also happened to be one of the first to get an ACE 900+ rating)?

2) What was the name of the stunning *Defender* bashing shoot-em-up from Logotron, soon to make a welcome reappearance on the Konix Console?

3) Name any two other Logotron Games (excepting the two you stand to win).

Send your answers on the back of a postcard or stuck-down envelope, along with your name, address, and whether you wish to recieve ST or Amiga versions of the game if you win. Entries must arrive by 7th December 1989. As per usual no post compo correspondance will be entered into, and employees of EMAP and Logotron Entertainment are absolutely barred from entering (sorry...).

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TITLE	SPEC CASS	SPEC DISK	C64 CASS	C64 DISK
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Stunt Car	10.50	16.95	10.50	16.95
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ACE DIARY NOV/DEC '89

NOVEMBER

WEEK'S RELEASES AT A GLANCE

Chaos Strikes Back (ST) from FTL/Mirrorsoft - Dungeon master data disk

Interphase (ST and Amiga) from Image Works - 3D vector graphic shoot 'em up

Bobo (all formats) from Infogrames - based on French cartoon character

Sim City (Amiga, PC and C64) from Infogrames - much-publicised 'God' simulator

Tintin on the Moon (all formats) from Infogrames - based on 60 year old comic book hero

Barbarian II (PC) from Palace - hack, hack and hack again

Barbarian (I) c/w *Antiriad* (PC double package) from Palace - keep hacking

Space Ace (ST and Amiga) from Readysoft - sequel to *Dragon's Lair*

MONDAY 13

35 shopping days until Christmas. Plenty of time yet.

Festival of St France's, patron saint of emigrants.

TUESDAY 14

Happy Birthday to King Hussein of Jordan.

WEEK'S RELEASES AT A GLANCE

Bar Games (PC) from Accolade - strange activities in American pubs.

Hard Drivin' (all formats) from Domark - famous coin-op conversion

Toobin' (CPC tape and disk) from Domark - not so famous inner-tube racing-sim

Liverpool (all formats - even MSX) from Grandslam - based on reasonably famous football team and club

Seven Gates of Jambala (ST, Amiga and C64) from Grandslam - run, jump, collect and dodge

Tank (ST) from Grandslam

Onslaught (ST and Amiga) from Hewson - arcade adventure

Stormlord (ST and Amiga) from Hewson

5th Gear (ST and Amiga) from Hewson - car racing for roadhogs

It Came From the Desert (Amiga 1Mb only) from Mirrorsoft

Blade Warrior (ST, Amiga, PC) from Mirrorsoft - hack and slay in fantasy setting

MONDAY 20

Last posting date for Christmas: the Azores, Canary Islands, the Vatican, Spain, Madeira and San Marino

THURSDAY 23

The Americans start tucking into their turkey now - for Thanksgiving Day.

FRIDAY 24

Computer Shopper Show, Alexandra Palace, London N22

Software and hardware bargains in a carnival atmosphere.

SATURDAY 25

Computer Shopper Show, Alexandra Palace, London N22

WEEK'S RELEASES AT A GLANCE

European Superleague (all formats) from CDS - football strategy

Vindicators (C64 tape and disk) from Domark

Star Wars Trilogy (Apple Mac) from Domark - all three titles in one package

Dynamic Debugger (Amiga) from Image Works - shoot 'em up

Bad Company (ST and Amiga) from Logotron - shoot 'em up

Jig Saw (Amiga and PC) from Logotron

Hardball II (PC) from Accolade - baseball sim

MONDAY 27

Last posting date for Christmas: all of continental Europe

THURSDAY 30

St Andrew's day

Gary Lineker born 1960

DECEMBER

FRIDAY 1

Festival of St Eligius, patron saint of smiths, farmers and metalworkers.

WEEK'S RELEASES AT A GLANCE

Powerboat USA (all formats bar Spectrum) from Accolade - powerboat racing sim

Dr Doom's Revenge (all formats) from Empire - comic book action

Warp (ST and Amiga) from Grandslam

Gore (ST, Amiga and PC) from Psygnosis

Ghouls'n'Ghosts (all formats) from US Gold - Capcom coin-op conversion

Heavy Metal (all formats) from Access/US Gold - US army sim

War of the Lance (C64) from SSI/US Gold - RPG

WEDNESDAY 6

Festival of St Nicholas, patron saint of countries, children, pawnbrokers and other causes Too Numerous To Mention

THURSDAY 7

January edition of ACE goes on sale. Form an orderly queue in your newsagent.

SATURDAY 9

Now only twelve shopping days until Christmas - frightening, isn't it?

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Bomber	phone	phone	phone
Dark Force	8.75	8.75	8.75
Double Dragon	6.90	6.90	6.90
Dragon Ninja	6.50	6.90	6.90
Dragon Spirit	6.90	6.90	6.90
Dynamite Dux	7.25	7.25	7.25
Forgotten Worlds	6.99	6.99	6.99
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Kabal	6.50	6.90	6.90
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New Zealand Story	6.50	6.99	6.99
Passing Shot	6.50	6.90	6.90
Quarterback	6.90	6.90	6.90
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Rick Dangerous	6.90	6.90	6.90
Robocop	6.90	6.90	6.90
Red Heat	6.50	6.90	6.90
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Altered Beast	13.79	16.79
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Beach Volley	12.79	15.79
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Red Heat	12.79	15.79
Robocop	12.79	15.79
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ACE DEALERS

Virgin Games Centre: head office 961 5500; contact Carolyn Stork Friday.

Tel's sells

The rapidly expanding Terri's Computers & Video opened its seventh shop on November 4, in Beckenham High Street, Kent.

Why not stroll down to take a look? The shop stocks 16-bit computers and games (nothing on 8-bit), as well as PC games, Sega and PC Engine software and they've promised to support the Konix Multi-System when (if) it becomes available.

Beckenham a bit out of your way? Other Terri's computer stores are in Sidcup High Street, Orpington High Street and Petts Wood Station Square - all in Kent.

Laughing all the way to the Funbank

Look out for stickers on doors and windows proclaiming that the store is taking part in the Funbank scheme. Buy your software from a Funbank dealer, and you'll be on your way to earning free games.

It works like this: you can pick up your special Funbank 'passport' from any participating store. Every time you buy a 16-bit title you get two tokens to stick into your passport; every time you buy an 8-bit title you get a single token.

Twelve tokens in your passport means you can claim a free 8-bit game; 18 tokens a free 16-bit game. Send your filled passport to distributor Leisuresoft - the address is on the passport - stating which title you'd like and wait for it to flop through the letterbox. You have until the end of January to take up Leisuresoft and 55 dealers up and down the country on their offer, so start collecting now.

Top Man goes soft

If you buy your clothes from Top Man (come on, admit it), you may have noticed one of this season's new lines is ... software. Chain store Microbyte, which has nine outlets in the North and Midlands, will be opening a 'shop within a shop' at 15 Top Man branches over the next few months.

'Toys for the Boys' (ugh) will be the name of the in-store concession, and will sell cassettes and CDs as well as the Top 15-20 software titles for Amiga, ST, Spectrum, C64 and Amstrad formats.

Look out for 'Toys for the Boys' in Top Mans (Top Men?) in [more to come]

Try before you buy ...

... is the theme at the four Software Superstore branches. Between now and Christmas they'll be hauling in the arcade cabinets so that you can experience all the thrills of the coin-op before (they hope) buying the computer version. Chase HQ and Operation Thunderbolt machines are both lined up to make appearances in the stores. But it's not just a matter of a quick blast before parting with your money - there are spot prizes and freebies such as T-shirts and posters waiting to give themselves away as well.

And if you buy regularly at Software Superstore, have you got a Gold Card yet? Claim a Gold Card when you buy any piece of software at full-price and you'll get a 10% discount of any further full-price purchases that you make.

Software Superstore has outlets at Hanley, Stoke-on-Trent, The Waingate, Sheffield, Little Underbank in Stockport and the centre of St Helen's.

[plus TDK promotion from last month's issue]

All offers and promotions are subject to availability of stock. Although we do our best to ensure our dealer promotion information is accurate at the time of going to press, ACE cannot take any responsibility for changes or cancellations to dealers' plans.

Attention dealers! Don't keep your promotions, competitions, special offers, etc, a secret. Tell us at ACE and we'll tell everybody else.

ACE DEALERS FORM

Dealers, don't keep your ACE readers in the dark. Send details of your promotions and events to us, and we'll let the world know about them. Just fill in the form and send it with your press pack to: ACE DEALERS PAGE, Priory Court, 30-32 Farringdon Lane, LONDON. EC1R 3AU.

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THE ACE PROFILE

A complete personal profile of the ACE team...

Steve Cooke

Editor

Age: 34
Born: Chelsea

TOP 5 MOVIES
1. Citizen Kane
2. Westworld
3. Crystal Voyager
4. Butch Cassidy
5. After Hours

TOP 5 BOOKS
1. Voyages of Doctor Dolittle
2. Dancers at the End of Time
3. Chronicles of Castle Brass
4. Operation Heartbreak
5. Madame Solario

TOP 5 MUSIC
1. Grateful Dead
2. Jefferson Airplane
3. Quicksilver Messenger Service
4. Love
5. Eurythmics

TOP 5 FOOD/DRINK
1. Chocolate Semolina
2. Home-Made Steak and Kidney Pie
3. Mescal
4. Hot Chocolate
5. Spanish Hot Chocolate (Thick)

Rik Haynes

Deputy Editor

Age: 22
Born: Westcliff-on-Sea, Essex

TOP 5 MOVIES
1. Blade Runner
2. Scarface
3. Terminator
4. The Thing
5. Return of the Living Dead

TOP 5 BOOKS
1. Berserker
2. The Forever War
3. Neuromancer
4. Count Zero
5. Burning Chrome

TOP 5 MUSIC
1. Gary Numan
2. Propaganda
3. Depeche Mode
4. Human League
5. Prince

TOP 5 FOOD/DRINK
1. Italian
2. Chinese
3. Vodka
4. Orbit Peppermint Sugarless Chewing Gum
5. Lobster

Laurence Scotford

Staff Writer

Age: 23
Born: Eastbourne

TOP 5 MOVIES
1. Darkstar
2. Silent Running
3. Apocalypse Now
4. Blue Velvet
5. Stunt Man

TOP 5 BOOKS
1. The Majors
2. The Maggot
3. Count Zero
4. On the Beach
5. The Great Gastby

TOP 5 MUSIC
1. Fleetwood Mac
2. Lyndsy Buckingham
3. Talking Heads
4. John and Vangelis
5. Tracie Chapman

TOP 5 FOOD/DRINK
1. Dry Martini
2. Hot Chocolate
3. Extra Srong Mints
4. American Hard Gums
5. Pasta Shells

Jim Willis

Art Editor

Age: 23
Born: Frodsham, Cheshire

TOP 5 MOVIES
1. With Nail and I
2. Blue Velvet
3. Mary Poppins
4. Unbearable Likeness to Being
5. How to Get Ahead in Advertising

TOP 5 BOOKS
1. Quark XPress Manual
"I haven't had time to read anything else!"

TOP 5 MUSIC
1. Elvis Costello
2. REM
3. Lloyd Cole and the Commotions
4. Talking Heads
5. Lone Justice

TOP 5 FOOD/DRINK
1. Jack Daniels
2. Hicks Special Draft
3. Chinese Vitals of all variety
4. Malibu
5. Rice Pudding and Jam sandwiches

Garry Williams

Advertising Manager

Age: 28
Born: Blackpool

TOP 5 MOVIES
1. Debbie Does Dallas
2. Erasor Head
3. Predator
4. Breakfast Club
5. Clockwork Orange

TOP 5 BOOKS
1. The Wasp Factory
2. Ransom
3. Bright Lights, Big City
4. Rules of Attraction
5. Less Than Zero

TOP 5 MUSIC
1. Rick Lee Jones
2. Fine Young Cannibals
3. Barry White
4. George Benson
5. Crazy Johnson

TOP 5 FOOD/MUSIC
1. Tennents Lager
2. Kebab
3. Murphy's Irish Stout
4. Higsons Bitter
5. Fish and Chips

Jerry Hall

Deputy Advertising Manager

Age: 32
Born: Sheffield

TOP 5 MOVIES
1. Close Encounters of the Third Kind
2. Close Encounters of the Third Kind (Special Edition) 3. ET
4. Star Dust
5. Sound of Music

TOP 5 BOOKS
1. Wind in the Willows
2. Complete Works of William Shakespear
3. Boycott Autobiography
4. Any Doctor Who book by Peter Haining
5. The complete works of Tom Sharp

TOP 5 MUSIC
1. Beatles
2. Rolling Stones
3. Monkey's
4. ABBA
5. Roxy Music

TOP 5 FOOD/DRINK
1. Steak in Red Wine
2. Tandori Mixed Grill
3. Bottle of Southern Comfort
4. Chips and Old Roger Bitter
5. More Chips with Beans

Melanie Costin

Production Controller

Age: 18
Born: London

TOP 5 MOVIES
1. Dead Poet's Society
2. The Bounty
3. Batman
4. Cocktail
5. U2 Rattle and Hum

TOP 5 BOOKS
1. Active Worm
2. China Town
3. Any Mills and Boon book
4. U2 Rattle and Hum
5. Any Agatha Cristie book

TOP 5 MUSIC
1. U2
2. Crowded House
3. Eric Clapton
4. Victor Laslo
5. George Benson

TOP 5 FOOD/DRINK
1. McDonald's
2. Champane
3. Salmon
4. Chinese
5. Fish and Chips

YOUR VERDICT PLEASE...

You've now got all the data needed for a complete psycho-analysis of the ACE crew. Are we completely crazy, very sensible or just plain boring? Write now and tell us your comments, theories or accusations.

The most informative, funny or bizarre set of results will win a special ACE Psycho-Profile Doctorate Certificate signed by professors Cooke, Haynes, Scotford and Willis (A very limited edition of one).

Write to: ACE Profile, Priory Court,
30-32 Farringdon Lane, London
EC1R 3AU.

THE ACE STOCKMARKET ENTRY FORM

ROUND ONE

Post this form or a photocopy to ACE Stockmarket, Priory Court, 30-32 Farringdon Lane, EC1R 3AU. Closing date 27th November 1989.

NAME: .... Telephone Number: ....

ADDRESS ....

.... Computer owned: ....

My prediction for next month's top five software houses on the Company Counter is:

1. ....
2. ....
3. ....
4. ....
5. ....

My prediction for next month's top five game on the Commodore 64 is:

1. ....
2. ....
3. ....
4. ....
5. ....

My prediction for next month's top five games on the Spectrum is:

1. ....
2. ....
3. ....
4. ....
5. ....

My prediction for next month's top five games on the Amstrad CPC is:

1. ....
2. ....
3. ....
4. ....
5. ....

My prediction for next month's top five games on the Atari ST is:

1. ....
2. ....
3. ....
4. ....
5. ....

My prediction for next month's top five games on the Amiga is:

1. ....
2. ....
3. ....
4. ....
5. ....

Rules:

All entries must be received by the closing date for this round of November 27th 1989.

No employees of EMAP, or of any company involved in the production, distribution, or sale of ACE Magazine are eligible for entry.

Only one entry per household.

The decision of the judges is final and correspondence cannot be entered into.

WHAT YOU HAVE TO DO

First, you need to check the ACE reviews pages to get an idea of the way games and software houses are moving up or down the charts. In future months, you'll also be able to keep a running record of the movements of the software house indices (starting this month at 100) to help you determine long term patterns.

There's £25.00 worth of software for your machine waiting for the first winner in each category each month picked at random from the qualifying entries. If the prize goes unclaimed for any category, we'll add a bonus mystery prize on for the next month – so there'll be some real goodies to get your hands on if you can get it right when others can't!

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All you have to do is send off the form below, together with your payment;
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The BLITTER END

IF YOU CAN'T BEAT THEM – EAT 'EM!

We just can't stomach this one. After indulging in hanky panky with the Power Glove, and dancing up and down on NEC's exercise pads, we have now been subjugating to – wait for it – the Nintendo cereal.

No, this is not a come-on, it's a very serious business, involving megabucks of license money and yet more income for the Japanese game giants who could now, if they wanted to, give every gamesplayer in Europe a free console and still show a profit. In fact, this latter tactic has been quite seriously suggested in some corners, who reckon that Nintendo would then make even more money by flogging us all expensive games to play on our free machines.

Well, that's something to think about over breakfast isn't it? Especially as you chew on the officially licensed cereal. Mat Simpson of South Woodford was so shocked he wrote in to tell us all about it. The advert reads 'Nintendo is two cereals in one. Wow! Super Mario Bros® and Zelda®. We rescued breakfast! If you can't beat them, eat 'em!'. 'I swear,' writes Mat, 'that this is true.'

Don't worry – we believe you. Sigh...

☆

You may by now have heard of the 'difficulties' behind the PC Show. The whole affair is clouded in litigation, but numerous parties are trying to stake their claim to the industry's number one show and the one thing that seems certain is that the PC Show, as you and I know it, will never happen again.

Three minutes silence.

Right, now for the plug. One of the parties attempting to muscle in on the act is none other than ACE's publisher, and Blitter is therefore perfectly well aware that most people will claim that anything I write in this column will be biased. However, anyone who's known me (and that includes Miss Fiorina in Brighton) for any reasonable length of time will testify that I have always strongly supported the idea of a games only show during the Autumn period – and it is a happy coincidence that this is exactly what our publishers are trying to set up now.

The reasons for this are devastatingly simple. Computer games have a bad press generally, however self-important the software industry may sometimes (but thankfully rarely) become, and good publicity is absolutely vital if the market is to increase. In fact publicity of any kind is better than the massive ignorance most other media show when confronted with the subject of computer entertainment.

The only way we can get publicity is by having a large public show in the country's biggest city on a regular basis, just before Christmas. We need TV coverage, radio coverage, and press coverage. And we ain't going to get that any other way.

There's also the question of new users. I bought my first computer after seeing the Spectrum at the PC Show. I was enticed there by the advertisements in the local press. Having a public showcase for entertainment technology is going to win us more converts than ever before these days with the advent of more impressive products. And it's especially important at a time when so many people are preparing to invest in the industry for the long-term benefits of CD-I and other potential profitmakers.

See you at the show, where you can accuse me to your heart's content of being biased. I'll be too busy enjoying myself to take much notice!

★

Paradise Computers in Brighton are busy shifting Public Domain disks by the dozen at only £1.50 each. Like any responsible duplicating house, they obviously have to take stringent precautions against viruses.

Unfortunately, someone in the marketing department has obviously misinterpreted company policy here as the company plan to give away a free condom with each order. When all else fails...

★

When things get hectic in the ACE office, a sudden ceasefire period is declared and for a few blissful minutes all you can hear is the thunk, thunk of darts burying themselves in an expensive new dartboard. Scores of 180 and more are, of course, commonplace.

What is perhaps less impressive in the scores department, and which leads one to suspect that people (particularly computer games players) have abandoned the traditional darts game, is the manner in which this dartboard came to grace our office.

Gremlin Graphics were the good sports involved – at the PC Show they offered the board and the darts to go with it (plus a very nice rubber ockey) to the person who go the highest score with three darts during the Show.

Competition was fierce. The highest score, achieved by our very own Jerry Hall, was...65.

★

As you may have noticed on this issue's front cover, ACE has entered the world of electronic retailing with the introduction of a horrible looking – but very functional – bar code.

Bar codes are already the smart thing to do in the States, but here in the UK we've been a bit slow to catch on. The big advantage, of course, is that you, the reader, will now be able to scan in the relevant details from the issues in your collection using your free cover-mounted bar-code reader and personal freshener. We anticipate getting this on the cover by around April 1st of next year.

Fortunately, the bar code won't be quite so obvious in future. This has been an ACE public announcement.

☆

Finally, just a quick welcome to the latest member of the ACE Team: Melanie Costin, who'll be in charge of ad production. And if you're wondering there isn't a picture on this month's Blitter, it's because we didn't want to insult the poor girl by printing her in black and white....

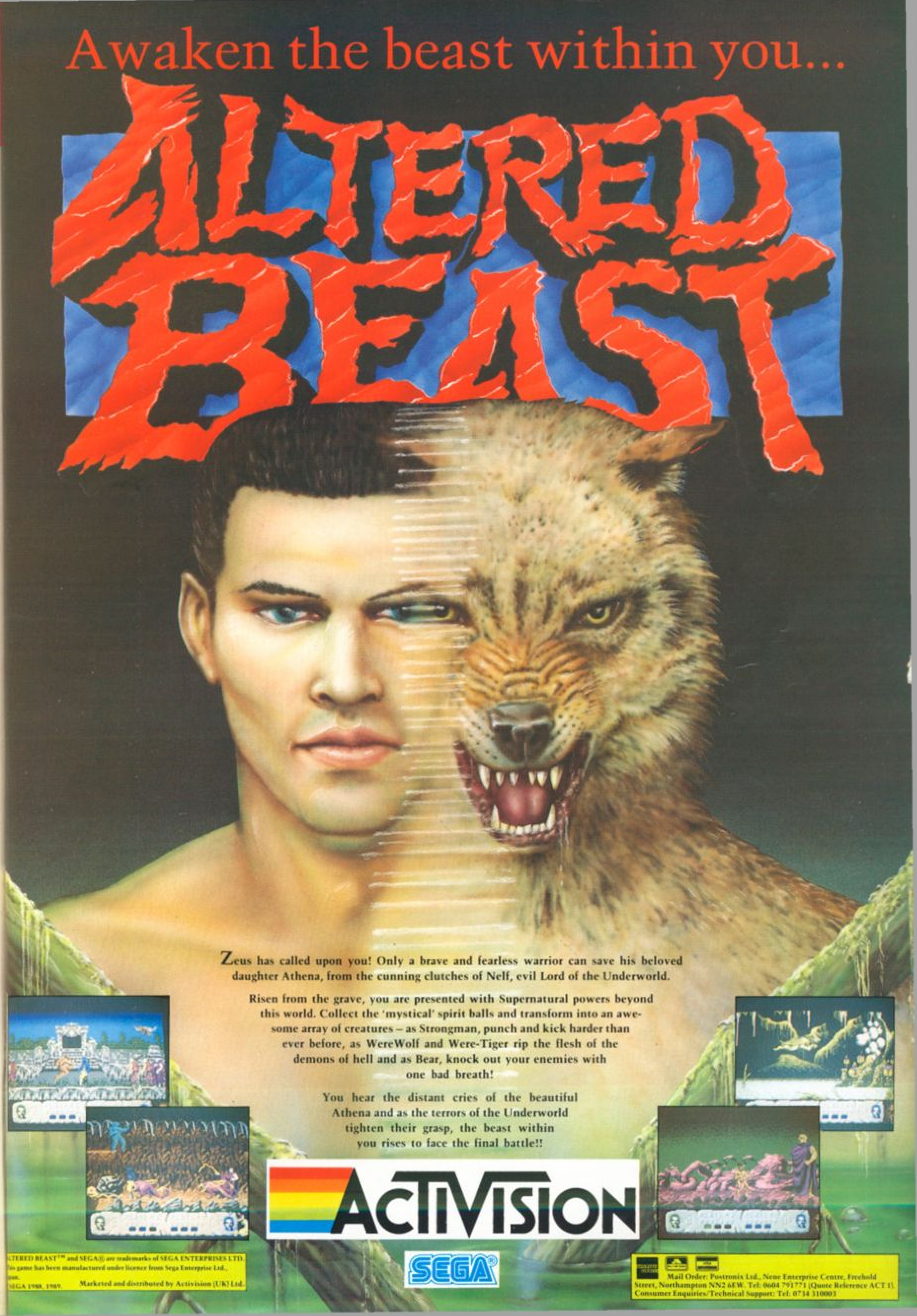
Blit-Blit!

NEXT MONTH...

In the next issue of ACE we'll be lavishing our annual Christmas present on you. This year it will be an essential fashion accessory which no self-respecting gamester can afford to be without – the ACE 1990 Diary. Packed with information on all the things you need to know, it'll be nestling on the cover of next month's ACE... Also in future issues you can look forward to exclusive coverage of hypermedia following a trip to the States, including a look at the successor to Cosmic Osmo and the first DVI games (see page 185 of this issue).

Ooops!

The Commodore Show at the Novotel this month is on the 17th-19th November, and not as previously stated. Apologies to all concerned.



Zeus has called upon you! Only a brave and fearless warrior can save his beloved daughter Athena, from the cunning clutches of Nelf, evil Lord of the Underworld.

Risen from the grave, you are presented with Supernatural powers beyond this world. Collect the 'mystical' spirit balls and transform into an awesome array of creatures – as Strongman, punch and kick harder than ever before, as WereWolf and Were-Tiger rip the flesh of the demons of hell and as Bear, knock out your enemies with one bad breath!

You hear the distant cries of the beautiful Athena and as the terrors of the Underworld tighten their grasp, the beast within you rises to face the final battle!!

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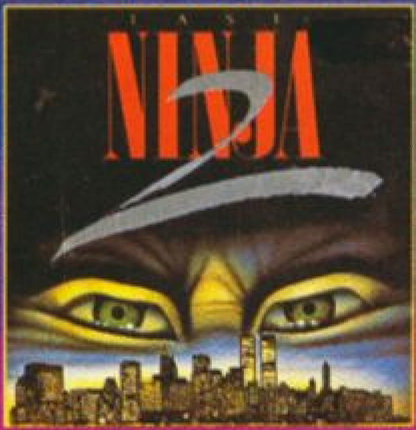
LAST NINJA 2



Once beaten, but not destroyed, the evil Shogun Kunitoki used all his mystic powers to transport himself through time and establish a new empire of tyranny in modern day Manhattan. In fear of Kunitoki's growing powers, the arcane gods used all their wisdom to bring you, the Last Ninja, across the abyss of time and confront your arch-enemy once more. You arrive in this frightening and awesome modern world bringing nothing with you save your intelligence, skill and cunning and a burning desire for vengeance. Will this be the final battle? Can you vanquish Kunitoki once and for all?

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WEC LE MANS

WEC LE MANS
24
DUNLOP

The World's most famous sports car race comes to your home computer screen with this exciting simulation of the 24 hour Le Mans race. World endurance Championship sports cars battle through day and night sequences where both strategy and driving skills are required to take the winner's laurels. This stimulating challenge inspired by Konami's sit in driving simulator reproduces all the elements at the famous race with every twist and turn of the track.

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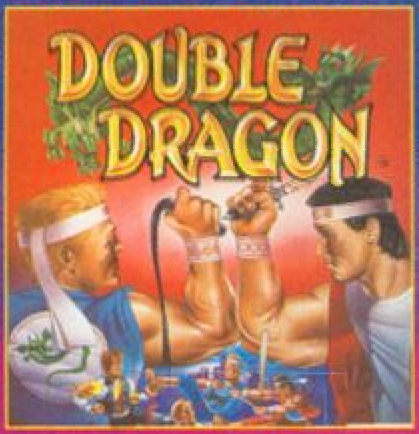
DOUBLE DRAGON



Skillful programming has taken the superb graphics and addictive game play of the monster Arcade hit and faithfully reproduced it in home computer versions.

Join in deadly combat with the savage street gang of the infamous Shadow Boss. Use whatever weapons come to hand as you pursue the gang through the slums, factories, and wooded outskirts of the city to reach the Black Warrior hideout, for the final confrontation with the Shadow Boss himself!

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